

ENTERTAINMENT FOR ALL

PLAYBOY

MAY/JUNE 2018



PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR: NINA DANIELE

THE INTERVIEW: PLANNED PARENTHOOD PRESIDENT CECILE RICHARDS • NEW FICTION BY CHUCK PALAHNIUK • 20Q: LATE-NIGHT HELL-RAISER JIM JEFFERIES • FOUR VETS & THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE ON EARTH • RETHINKING THE FEMALE ORGASM • EXCLUSIVE HELLBOY COMIC • ZANE LOWE • PORTUGAL. THE MAN • LEON BRIDGES • DAN AUERBACH • G-EAZY • JORJA SMITH • THE STATE OF JAZZ



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PLAYBILL



Zoe McConnell

McConnell got her big break shooting Rihanna for the cover of *Complex*. Since then she has turned her lens on Rita Ora, A\$AP Rocky and a host of other luminaries. The shutterbug's starry music portfolio made her the perfect person to capture sexy and soulful *Let's Play* subject Jorja Smith, a fellow Brit whom McConnell deems "effortlessly cool."



Austin Hargrave

Besides "compliments for vacation pictures on Facebook," this Manchester, U.K.-born photographer's accomplishments include a portfolio packed with portraits of everyone from Donald Glover to Hillary Clinton to Lorde. He compares photographing Zane Lowe to shooting a sports event: "He didn't stand still for the entire show."

Diego Patiño

This Brooklyn-based illustrator's summary of himself may also serve as a description of his smart and sexy artwork: "a seemingly functional and uneven amalgam of adenine, guanine, cytosine, thymine and hopefully some other stuff." Patiño's provocative pulp style is on full display in Chuck Palahniuk's *Unlawful Entry*.



Toni-Blaze

A stylist as well as the editor in chief of *Wonderland* magazine, Toni-Blaze grew up with a mother who encouraged self-expression and a grandmother who owned her own tailoring business in Nigeria. She uses her bold sartorial sensibility to outfit clients including Lupita Nyong'o, Mary J. Blige and Jorja Smith, whom she styled for the latest *Let's Play*.



Julian Tepper

"Watching my father's video on MTV as a kid was an incredible thrill," says Tepper. *Between the Records*, a selection from his forthcoming novel, features a character with a similar background. As a member of the band Natural History, Tepper co-wrote the song "Don't You Ever," later adapted by the legendary indie group Spoon.



Dan Hyman

In *An American Outlaw*, Hyman recounts Hugh Hefner's 1963 obscenity arrest. "It shows how far people were willing to go at the time to maintain the status quo," he says of the case. Also in this issue, Hyman profiles music mastermind Zane Lowe, whose "inquisitiveness and disarming personality explain why artists open up to him."

Ruby Law

"It felt like we brought the Playboy Mansion to a breathtaking villa in Bali," says Law of the steamy jungle backdrop for her "fun and sexy" shoot with Raluca Cojocaru (*Under the Mangroves*). The photographer will unveil her first personal show in Hong Kong this summer: an LGBT-themed exhibit about love, sex and frustration.



Mike Mignola

"I've always loved English legends. A guy going out in a suit of armor covered in spikes to fight a dragon—that's just made for comics," says Mignola. In *Return of the Lambton Worm*, the *Hellboy* creator's superhero wrestles with good, evil and a giant invertebrate. A third *Hellboy* film, starring David Harbour of *Stranger Things*, is out next year.



CREDITS: Cover and pp. 54–65 model Nina Daniele at One Management, photography by Jennifer Stenglein, styling by Kelley Ash, hair by Amber Duarte for Atelier Management, makeup by Matisse Andrews, prop styling by Ali Gallagher for Jones Management. Photography by: p. 4 courtesy Austin Hargrave, courtesy Dan Hyman, courtesy Ruby Law, courtesy Zoe McConnell, courtesy Mike Mignola, courtesy Toni-Blaze, Jenna Gribbon; p. 16 Aaron Feaver; p. 17 courtesy Ines Rau, Samuel Alemayhu, Playboy Archives, TAO Las Vegas, Evan Woods; p. 20 courtesy Playboy (2), Ali Mitton, Adam Mont, Levon Muradian, Elliott Wilkie; p. 27 courtesy Ryman Auditorium, Andrea Behrends, Smithereen11/Flickr; p. 28 courtesy Slumerican Made, Jason Davis/Getty Images for Americana Music, Ron Manville, Mayter Scott; p. 33 courtesy Movement Festival, Natalie Behring, Aaron Glassman, J. Scott Kunkel; p. 66 Rob Davidson, Maarten de Boer/Contour by Getty Images, Jati Lindsay, Deneka Peniston; p. 67 Rick Diamond/Getty Images for Essential Broadcast Media; p. 68 Rob Davidson; p. 69 Piotr Redlinski; p. 70 Deneka Peniston; pp. 159–176 Playboy Archives. Pp. 94–97 excerpted with permission from *Adjustment Day* by Chuck Palahniuk (W.W. Norton). Pp. 140–145 *Hellboy: Return of the Lambton Worm*, written by Mike Mignola, art by Ben Stenbeck, color by Dave Stewart, lettering by Clem Robins, editing by Katie O'Brien, digital art tech by Christina McKenzie, *Hellboy*™ & © Mike Mignola. P. 23 styling by Toni-Blaze for LMC Worldwide, hair by Joy Matsashi, makeup by Carol Lopez Reid; pp. 41–48 hair by Zaiya Latt for Bryan Bantry Agency, makeup by Matin for Tracey Mattingly; pp. 72–75 styling by Kit Scarbo, grooming by Julia Papworth; pp. 76–89 model Shauna Sexton, styling by Kelly Brown, hair by David Keough for Art Department, makeup by Michal Cohen, produced by Nick Larsen; pp. 104–111 model Elisa Meliani, styling by Kelley Ash, makeup by Matisse Andrews; pp. 118–132 model Cassandra Dawn at Frank Model Management, styling by Kelley Ash, hair and makeup by Bree Collins; pp. 134–139 styling by Ian Bradley for Starworks Artists, grooming by Aidan Keogh for Honey Artists; pp. 152–158 model Raluca Cojocaru, styling by Ruby Law, hair and makeup by Rosarinho Rodrigues.

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CONTENTS

Departments

LET'S PLAY From online obscurity to a hit *Black Panther* song, Jorja Smith has come a long way in a short time **23**

DRINKS Four beer-booze mash-ups to help you ring in the spring **24**

TRAVEL Get your honky-tonk on in our do-it-like-a-local guide to Nashville **26**

SEX Orgasm 101: Become a master at pushing her button **30**

TV Wordsmith and performer Anna Deavere Smith is a force to be reckoned with **34**

POLITICS Why a bevy of bean counters could protect our democracy from malicious Russian influence **36**

ALSO: The force is strong with *Drawn Data*; the best small music fests; *Playboy Advisor* on take-charge women; and more

Features

INTERVIEW Cecile Richards, outgoing president of Planned Parenthood, tells us all about making trouble **41**

THE ACCIDENTAL POP STARS Portugal. The Man navigate their meteoric success—with the help of a hot-dog roller **50**

THE STATE OF JAZZ A look at the ever-shifting landscape of America's essential art form **66**

20Q What do bananas and *The Last Jedi* have in common? Comedian Jim Jefferies has very strong feelings about them **72**

ON THE ROAD WITH G-EAZY Slip backstage with the tireless rapper and record producer **92**

FICTION With a little larceny and a lot of love, Walter plans to steal a heart in *Unlawful Entry* by Chuck Palahniuk **94**

PROFILE Beats 1 guru Zane Lowe makes a rare appearance away from the mixing board **98**

SURVIVING THE DARIÉN GAP It's man versus jungle in one of the world's most dangerous places **112**

BETTER MAN A springtime style feature, in which singer Leon Bridges expands his retro repertoire **134**

HELLBOY Beware creepy coffins in *Return of the Lambton Worm*, an exclusive comic from Mike Mignola and Ben Stenbeck **140**

FICTION It's Hollywood, 1987, and the perfect tune is as elusive as family harmony in Julian Tepper's *Between the Records* **146**

HERITAGE Jazz Fest turns 40. Plus: Hef's 1963 arrest; Playmates Michele Drake and Elan Carter; classic cartoons **159**

Pictorials

PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR Top honors for 2018 go to Nina Daniele, who evokes the iconic Femlin **54**

LET'S GET PHYSICAL It's training day with May Playmate Shauna Sexton; how many reps can you handle? **76**

MEDITERRANEAN MORNING Sicily is postcard-perfect with Elisa Meliani in the picture **104**

CALIFORNIA DREAMING Let sunny June Playmate Cassandra Dawn put you in a Cali state of mind **118**

UNDER THE MANGROVES Join Raluca Cojocaru on a steamy Indonesian excursion **152**

ON THE COVER Nina Daniele, photographed by Jennifer Stenglein. CG artwork by Justin Metz.

Opposite: The Femlin circa 1994, drawn by LeRoy Neiman.



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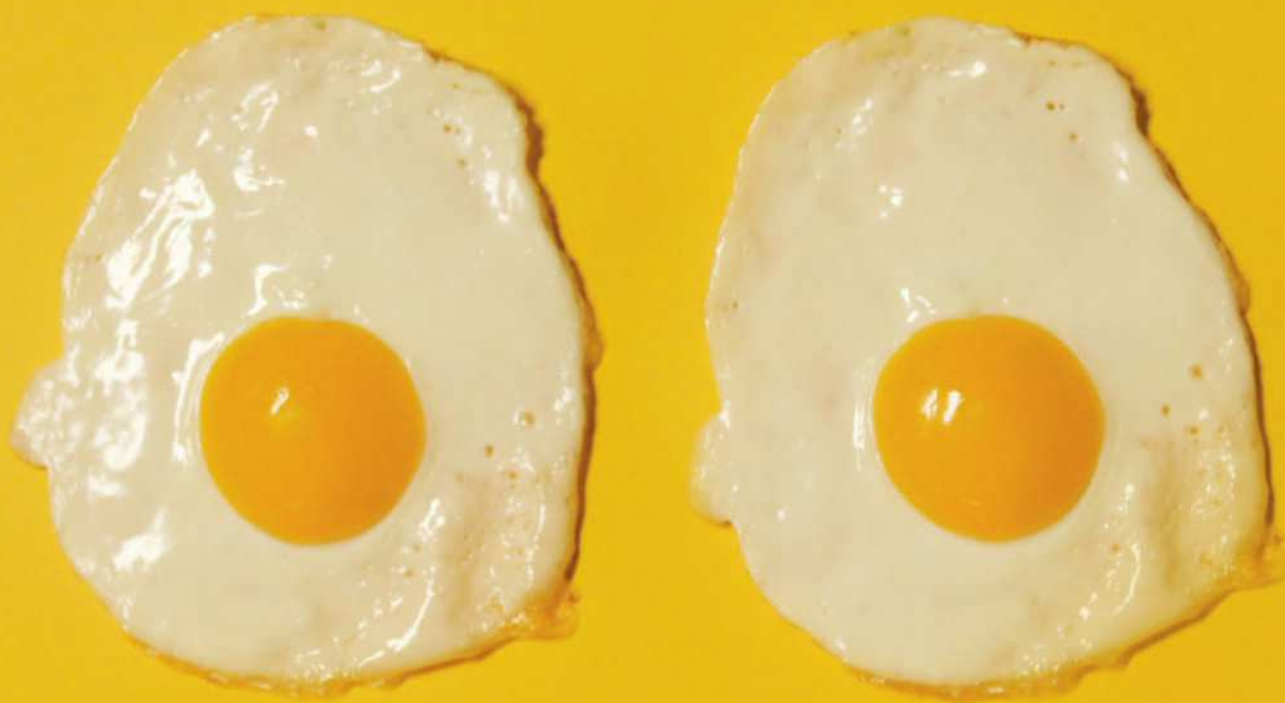
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DEAR PLAYBOY

DEAR JOHN

What an awesome *Playboy Interview* (March/April). Rather than make the conversation totally political, John Krasinski focused on his support of the military and his shortcomings with girls in high school—a topic that is relatable for me. It's not surprising that so many women on Tinder say they're looking for their Jim Halpert.

*Nick Reed
Bartonville, Illinois*

I wonder what Jim Halpert would have thought if someone had told him he would end up marrying Emily Blunt one day. All kidding aside, it sounds as though Krasinski is living an enviable life, a welcome change considering the growing list of sexual-misconduct allegations swirling around Hollywood seemingly every week now. Let's not forget about the good guys who are left.

*Nicole Bailey
Des Moines, Iowa*

THE ART OF SELF-LOVE

I just got my first issue (January/February) from the subscription that my now ex-boyfriend got me for Christmas. Funny, huh? I'm writing to tell you I'm a bit disappointed. Surely you know you have some female readers (straight ones at that) who seek out the magazine for its top-notch writing. Imagine my chagrin when I realized the *Palma Sutra* self-stimulation guide was geared only toward men. I'm single now, and it would have been a handy (pun intended) read for me. Alas, I have no penis. Otherwise, fabulous issue.

*Denise K. James
Charleston, South Carolina*

Have a look at Rethinking the Female Orgasm in this issue (page 30). It's not about self-stimulation, but it might serve you well in your next relationship.

LEARNING CURVES

Your March/April issue provides a much needed breath of fresh air. Both *The Gender Revolution* (especially Cooper Hefner's timely essay on the distinction between sex and sexism in *The Playboy Philosophy*) and the profile of the prodigious Steven Pinker make the world seem a bit less like a flaming clown car flying off the cliff of sanity. Best of all was April Playmate Nereyda Bird (*Bird of Paradise*). She's a welcome deviation from the monolithic model standard that dominates

what defines beauty these days. Like the decision to feature Ines Rau, your first transgender Playmate (*Enchanté, Mademoiselle Rau*, November/December), a decision to include some body-size diversity (i.e., more curves) would be brilliant.

*J.J. Vaughan
Edmonton, Alberta*

THERE'S NO I IN TEAM

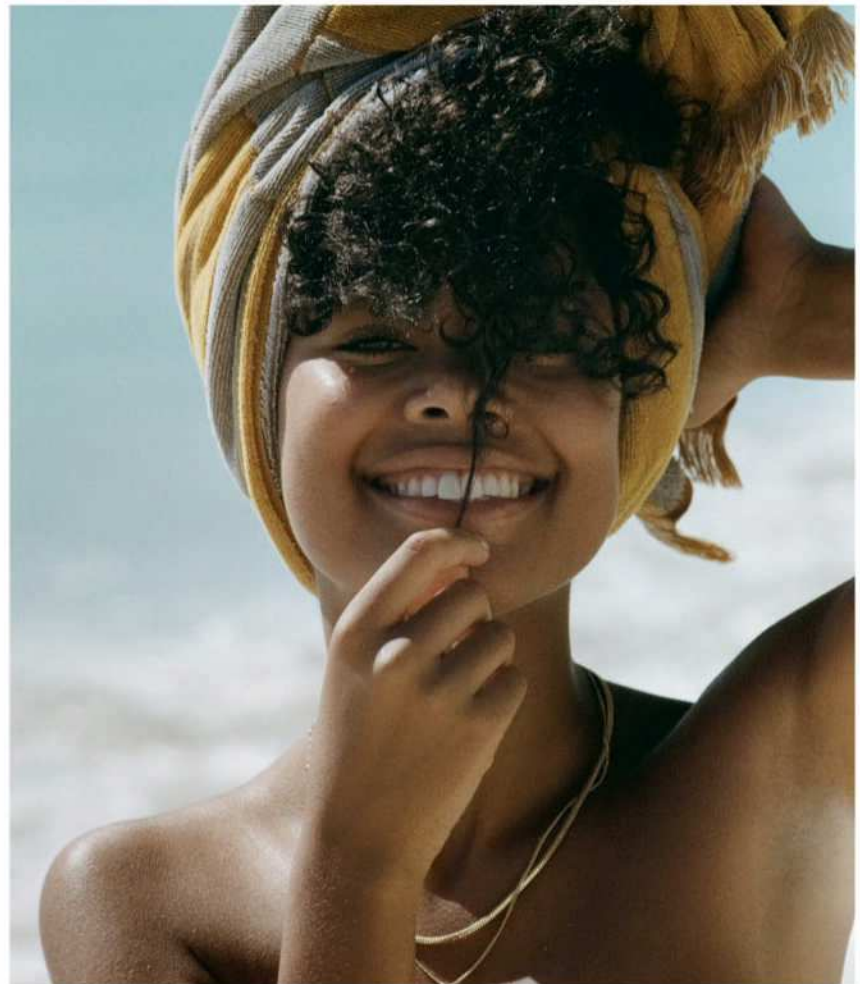
I'm writing in response to Mickey Rapkin's essay *Help Wanted* (March/April). I took a workshop in 1984 called Men, Sex and Power, and since then I've been on a variety of men's teams. A few lessons I've learned: Men cannot get the courage they need to break through barriers in their lives without support from other men. It's not a wife's role to do that. The connection between the right and left brains in a woman is like an eight-lane superhighway, and in a man it is more like a cow path. In general, men's ability to connect with our emotions is more primitive. Being around other men who

have strong masculine identities combined with community-based values can guide men through trying times—such as divorce, break-ups, career changes, family tragedies, financial difficulties, illness and the growth, maturation and aging processes.

I've seen powerful transformations in men. Imagine a man who has everything on the surface—wealth, distinguished career, prestigious position and beautiful wife and kids—and yet, because his wife has unexplored issues with physical abuse and trauma, she isn't able to be truly intimate with him. Imagine a team helping him develop the courage to support her in a way that allows transformation to occur and great joy to be brought to both.

Over the many years I've been involved in men's groups, these are the kinds of things I've witnessed firsthand. If you haven't already explored being on a men's team, contact MDI and get started. You won't regret it.

*Anonymous
Via Playboy.com*



April Playmate Nereyda Bird gives flight to springtime fantasies.

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DEAR PLAYBOY

PLAYMATE SALUTE, PLEASE

Your tradition of sending a delegation of Playmates to visit the West Los Angeles Veterans Administration Medical Center each year is a wonderful thing (*World of Playboy*, January/February). I'm sure it lifts the vets' spirits, and it shows that Playboy is patriotic and supports the armed services. However, don't we get to see the results of the pinup-style shoot? How about a multipage pictorial?

Phil Bevans
Portland, Oregon

It's your lucky day: You can view selections from the exclusive shoot on Playboy Classic, our smartphone and tablet app.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

I just want to congratulate you on the semi-new *Heritage* section of the magazine. I love seeing Playmates from previous eras and the styles of the times. It's also nice to know the Centerfolds have been gorgeous since the beginning.

Dan Todd
Baltimore, Maryland

TIME'S UP

In response to Jessica P. Ogilvie's article *You Better Work* (March/April), more education on sexual harassment would be helpful. Many people probably don't realize that behaviors that may be acceptable outside of work may be illegal in the workplace. Bartering favorable treatment in exchange for sexual favors might seem okay if it is consensual, but quid pro quo offers are illegal at work. Creating a hostile workplace environment is illegal. Even pictures of your family in swimsuits at the beach can be considered inappropriate.

Expanding on the idea that we need more women starting and running companies, it would also be helpful to have more women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) areas. An article in *PLAYBOY* from a few years ago illustrates how the person who programmed the original Snapchat server came out way ahead of the person who came up with the idea for the app (*The Billion-Dollar Battle for Snapchat*, March 2014). Female graduates of the electrical and computer engineering program at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis whom I've observed have been impressively successful in their careers.

What shocks me the most about recent revelations of sexual harassment is how boorish, tasteless and vulgar a lot of the perpetrators are. If these people truly bought into the culture



Steven Pinker: a beacon of humanism and hope.

promoted by *PLAYBOY* and acted with more class, we would all be better off.

Steven Rovnyak
Indianapolis, Indiana

SOME HARD ADVICE

You're trying very hard to be progressive in the March/April issue, and given recent events such as the accusations against Harvey Weinstein and the #MeToo movement, that's understandable. Being on the side of women who've been wronged is a good thing. After all, the magazine depends on women as models, writers and sometimes customers. But unlike a few smart people out there, *PLAYBOY* apparently doesn't know where to stop. You talk about toxic masculinity (*Help Wanted*), but when looking for a new masculinity, you come up with nothing (*The Playboy Philosophy*). This is presumably because in the current trends you can't define any gender or sexual differences as positive. *PLAYBOY* needs to decide whether it wants to be a magazine of third-wave feminism or erotica for men.

Trond Sigurdson
Los Angeles, California

We respectfully disagree with your assumption that contemporary feminism and erotica for men are mutually exclusive. As to your remark about "a new masculinity," our

goal here is not to offer a cookie-cutter masculine archetype but to urge our male readers to reflect, discuss, debate and—most important—evolve.

PINKER'S PROMISING FUTURE

Steven Pinker (March/April) is the leading humanist of our age, and humanism is the emerging credo of our species. I view his writings as cornerstones akin to Confucius's *Analects*—works that prime us for the opportunities unfolding for mankind. As an advocate of continuance, I believe that optimistic solidarity will rationalize human activity in the coming centuries.

Anonymous
Via *Playboy.com*

SAY WHAT? SAY WATWOOD

Talk about perfection. March Playmate Jenny Watwood (*The Woman Who Fell to Earth*, March/April) is one of the hottest ever, with the perfect face to grace your cover. As far as I'm concerned, she's my Playmate of the Year.

Harry Assad
El Paso, Texas

PUFF, PUFF, PASS

What an incredible March/April issue. I've been a *PLAYBOY* reader since the 1960s, and the magazine has had a lasting influence on my life. My bedroom walls are covered with various Centerfolds, but March Playmate Jenny Watwood didn't make the cut due to her love of pot (*Data Sheet*). Nereyda Bird (*Bird of Paradise*), however, occupies a place of honor. She's incredible. Keep up the good work.

Michael Shore
Charleston, South Carolina

We hope you, an avid reader, didn't miss our feature A Stoned Swan Song, on California's annual Cannabis Cup, in the same issue. Whether or not you partake, it's an enlightening look at weed culture at the dawn of full legalization.

COVER STORY

May we raise a glass to PMOY Nina Daniele, a woman of ambition and good cheer. Our Rabbit never turns down an invitation to celebrate.



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PAGING DR. QUINN

We at Playboy have adored Jane Seymour ever since we featured her in a Bond girl-themed pictorial back in 1973. Even so, we didn't know how our recent Playboy.com profile of the British bombshell, shot by Aaron Feaver, would resonate with readers—until it amassed 1.1 billion media impressions and more than 26,000 likes on Seymour's Instagram. Contributor Rebecca Haithcoat had spent an afternoon with the actress, chatting about everything from Seymour's new sitcom, *Let's Get Physical*, to feeling sexier

than ever at 67. The most memorable moment? Haithcoat recalls, "When her publicist popped in to tell her she needed to hurry and change for a cocktail party that night, Jane didn't hesitate to lead me into her boudoir. Perched on the edge of her bathroom counter, I weighed in on whether she was wearing too much makeup (nope) and if she could get away with 'ratty' hair (oh yes). 'It takes a village!' she'd called out at the shoot. It definitely was fun being part of Jane Seymour's village for an hour or two."





JOY TIMES FOUR

For its fourth Playboy collaboration, streetwear brand Joyrich took inspiration from the decade of disco. The new collection includes sparkling sequin jackets, shiny tracksuits and a selection of jerseys that, to quote the Joyrich brass, “pay homage to an era of glittering lights while celebrating unapologetic fun.” The two brands launched the line with a night of dancing and disco balls at L.A.’s Wild Style. Check out the complete line at Joyrich.com.



Pushing the Right Buttons

Nearly 800 Playmates have appeared in **PLAYBOY** since 1953; last year, Ines Rau made history as the first transgender woman to earn that distinction. The British LGBT Awards recognized the milestone by nominating Chief Creative Officer Cooper Hefner for one of its coveted trophies. Hefner, who will attend the ceremony in London this May, joins a list of nominees that includes Laverne Cox, Harry Styles and Demi Lovato.



PARTY FOR POLICY

In February, our first-ever Creatives for Climate auction raised more than \$20,000 for climate-change initiatives through the sale of several works of Playboy-inspired art. Artist Tristan Eaton, seen here with Playmates Kimberly Phillips and Stephanie Branton, was among the revelers at L.A.’s OUE Skyspace. Simple Vodka and Golden Road Brewery kept things well lubricated.

Beach Bunnies

For the second year running, Playboy is making the hottest pool party in Vegas even hotter. Playboy Fridays at TAO Beach, the Venetian hotel’s 18,000-square-foot poolside playground, features Bunny servers, Playmate hosts and stellar DJs every Friday through Labor Day. Playboy staffers will be on site to host Discover & Be Discovered, our talent search for future muses. For tickets and VIP reservations (21 and over only), visit TaoLasVegas.com.



Loving Lacey

Who’s the fairest Bunny of them all? Pose this question to anyone at Playboy HQ and the response will surely be Pat Lacey, who recently capped off a five-decade run with the Rabbit. In 1965, Lacey was hired as a Bunny at the Playboy Club on the Sunset Strip. During a 28-episode stint on *Playboy After Dark*, she became friendly with fellow extra Barbi Benton. “Barbi and Hef came to the club one night and sat at my table,” she recalls. “The next morning, my Bunny Mother called me and said, ‘Hef wants you to be a Jet Bunny.’ I said, ‘All right!’” Lacey eventually became a Bunny Mother herself, and then coordinator of Playmate Promotions, a role she held through February, when she left to work on *The Black Bunny Hop*, her memoir of the civil rights era. We love you, Lacey!





JŌVAN

It's what attracts

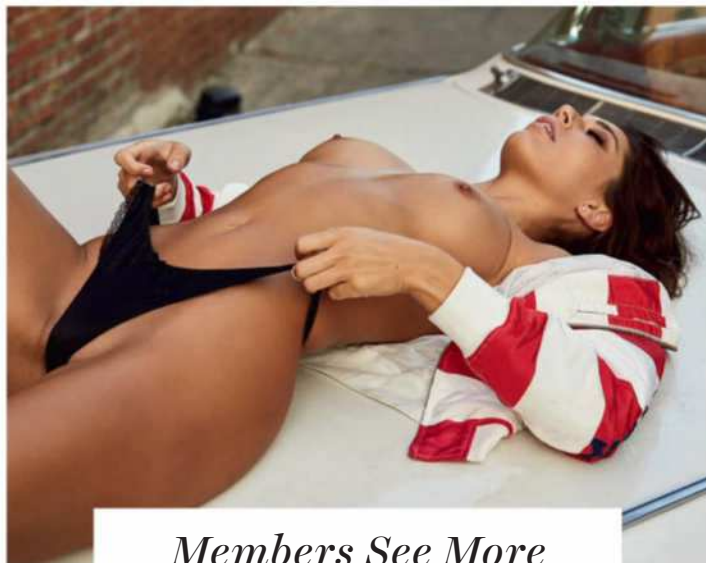




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The Last Geisha

Fewer than 300 geisha remain in Japan's Gion district, signaling the possible extinction of one of the world's most ancient subcultures. For this exclusive Playboy.com feature, we sent Joshua Hunt to Kyoto to investigate the waning tradition.


WATCH

Now Streaming

Members can watch a lineup of Playboy originals including *Topless Chef* (self-explanatory), *A Moment With* (a filmic spin on our pictorials) and *Playboy Speed* (below), featuring champion drifter Chris Forsberg test-driving the best wheels.




EXCLUSIVES



Lauren Breaks Free

Following the announcement that her chart-topping pop group Fifth Harmony had disbanded, singer Lauren Jauregui spoke to us first about her future in music. See the accompanying Eden-inspired pictorial only on Playboy.com.


PRODUCTS

Board Life

Exclusive to Playboy members: our first Centerfold Boards collection. The skateboards feature Playmates such as Kennedy Summers, Elizabeth Elam and Amberleigh West (below). The first drop is available this summer.




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LET'S PLAY

JORJA SMITH

On January 19, 2016, Jorja Smith made a decision that would alter her life forever. After years of posting cover songs on YouTube, the suburban British teen mustered the courage to upload her first original—a meditation on police brutality called “Blue Lights”—to SoundCloud. And so began the ascent of a star. “I don’t want to disappoint myself, so I just kind of let things happen,” Smith says, reminiscing about the song’s sudden appearance on London radio playlists. Her first EP, *Project 11*, squashed any murmurs of one-hit wonder, presenting a deft young talent who could swing between heart-breaker and heartbroken. At a time of near-ubiquitous synths and Auto-Tune, Smith favors the neo-soul of Sade and Alicia Keys; her smoky voice glides as naturally as the curves of her body. Having already earned a coveted Brit Award and collaborated with Drake and Kendrick Lamar, Smith is just getting started. This summer will see both her 21st birthday and the release of her already buzzy debut album—which she faces with characteristic modesty. “I wasn’t so confident growing up,” she says. “I thought I wasn’t thin enough or too tan. Now there are so many people watching me, I have to try to not care.”—*Ariela Kozin*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ZOE MCCONNELL





DRINKS

BEER TODAY, *Gone Tomorrow*

Elegant, summer-ready drinks that won't get you hammered? Check out how four establishments are elevating the beer cocktail

BY MACKENZIE FEGAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC MEDSKER

Beer purists, put down the pitchforks. Think of the concoctions featured here not as bastardizations of good beer but as flavorful, effervescent ways to lower the alcohol content so summer Fridays won't lead to remorseful Saturdays. "Beer cocktails get a bad rap," says Natasha David, proprietor of Nitecap in New York, "but you're already doing something kind of naughty when you make a cocktail. I'm taking, say, whiskey a distiller has perfected and adding a bunch of shit to something that's supposedly perfect as is. It's the same with beer." And much as a whiskey enthusiast might still enjoy an old fashioned, a craft-beer lover might appreciate a well-made shandy—like the Double Take that David serves at Nitecap. You'd be wise to multiply her recipe by 10 and have a pitcher on hand for your first summer barbecue. In David's words, "This is a daytime-drinking, out-on-the-porch-grilling, take-it-down-in-a-few-sips cocktail for sure." Hop to it.

ODE TO PICON

Picon, a bitter orange liqueur, is not available in the U.S., but Petit Trois in Los Angeles has invented a stateside Picon bière tribute with just the right pairing of amaro and triple sec.

- ½ oz. Averna amaro
- ½ oz. Combier triple sec
- ¼ oz. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ oz. simple syrup
- 2 dashes Angostura orange bitters
- 6 oz. Kronenbourg

Combine all ingredients except beer in a highball glass. Add ice, top off with Kronenbourg, and garnish with an orange peel and a Luxardo cherry.

BLACK BIRD

With its millennial-pink head, Guinness and blackcurrant is mostly an underage indulgence—until now. This version from L.A.'s Hearth & Hound concentrates the Guinness rather than the fruit juice.

- 1½ oz. Irish whiskey
- ½ oz. Campari
- 1 oz. fresh pineapple juice
- ¾ oz. fresh lime juice
- 1 dash Angostura bitters
- ¾ oz. Guinness reduction*

Combine all ingredients in a shaker with ice. Shake for 10 seconds. Strain; pour into rocks glass over ice.

*GUINNESS REDUCTION

Pour a 14.9-ounce can of Guinness into a saucepan and heat until boiling. Lower heat and simmer until reduced by two thirds. Remove from heat. Stir in two-thirds cup brown sugar until dissolved. Let cool.

TOKYO BODEGA

Sunday in Brooklyn's riff on the sake bomb doesn't involve chopsticks or chanting, but the presentation is a stunner.

- 1½ oz. junmai ginjo sake
- ½ oz. vanilla-bean simple syrup
- 1 bar spoon St.-Germain Elderflower liqueur
- 1 pony (7-ounce bottle) Miller High Life

Combine all ingredients except beer in a glass beaker. Fill a rice bowl with pebble ice, garnish with a lemon wheel and a lime wheel, and place beaker on top of ice. Open beer bottle, then quickly shove it into ice upside down. Pour some of beaker contents over ice and sip with a straw, adding more to bowl as desired.



DOUBLE TAKE ►

Originally called a "shandygaff," which sounds like British slang for something filthy, the shandy is traditionally made with lager or ale and fizzy lemonade. Nitecap adds a few enchanting accents.

- 1½ oz. Yola mezcal
- ½ oz. Cappelletti
- ½ oz. fresh lime juice
- ½ oz. fresh pineapple juice
- ½ oz. cane syrup (blend 2 parts cane sugar with 1 part water until granules dissolve)
- 2 oz. Belgian wheat beer

Combine all ingredients except beer in a shaker with ice. Shake for 10 seconds. Strain into an eight-ounce glass with no ice. Top with beer; garnish with a pineapple wedge.



From behind the bar at
Nitecap, proprietor Natasha
David serves up her signature
Double Take.





TRAVEL

Our top picks and inside tips on how to do Music City like a local

With its mix of raucous music clubs and neon honky-tonks, Nashville feels like a small town with a lot going on—despite the fact that last year it passed Memphis as Tennessee’s largest city. Combining the laid-back, neighborly

BY **JACOB SIEGEL**

vibe you’d expect in the South with the excitement of a city buzzing with creative energy, Nashville is above all a town for music fans. “Anyone you see playing here is world-class,” says Anthony Simpkins, a 26-year-old Nashville local who runs GemsOnVHS, a YouTube channel that showcases raw performances by local acts. “There’s so much talent here it drives everybody to raise the bar.”

Nashvilleans couldn’t be friendlier or more welcoming; the weather, on the other hand, can be unpredictable. But if storm clouds gather, there’s bound to be something fun to do indoors.

So how to do Nashville like a local? First, skip the famous strip of bars and clubs on Broadway. Yes, the nighttime neon makes for a great photo, but unless you enjoy drinking overpriced beer in overcrowded bars with underinformed tourists, you can do better. We asked Simpkins and other Nashville insiders—including Black

Keys frontman Dan Auerbach—to share their tips on the best places to hear live music, grab a beer, go record shopping and more.

RYMAN AUDITORIUM

116 Fifth Avenue North

It’s appropriate that this venue is a former house of worship, because these days it’s nothing short of a cathedral to country music. The auditorium housed the *Grand Ole Opry* show for three decades, and Hank Williams got his start here. Today it’s a National Historic Landmark, and everyone who’s anyone, from Johnny Cash to the Avett Brothers, has graced its hardwood stage. “You’re standing where these artists stood,” says Simpkins. “The place is beautiful, like an old Civil War theater, and you get a feeling like, wow, you’re sharing the space with ghosts.”

GRUHN GUITARS

2120 Eighth Avenue South

You’d be hard-pressed to return home with a better Nashville souvenir than a fretted beauty. Gruhn offers a mix of new and used guitars alongside a world-class collection of vintage instruments. The three-floor empo-

rium employs veteran musicians and some of the best guitar doctors in the world, and its stringed inventory—ukes, banjos, mandolins and more—will impress seasoned players and novices alike.

ROLF AND DAUGHTERS

700 Taylor Street

Take a trip to the teeming Germantown neighborhood for an upscale Tennessee farm-to-table spin on Italian. The menu is innovative, fresh and ever-changing, highlighting the best of what’s available in the area—including aged lamb racks from nearby Bear Creek Farm. In 2013 *Bon Appétit* called it one of “the best new restaurants in America.” Minus the “new,” the praise is still apt. Jaan Cohan, a touring guitarist, loves how the restaurant represents local heritage. “They put a Southern twist on it, whether it’s the type of meat they use, like local quail or duck, or using certain spices found only in the South.”

COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

222 Fifth Avenue South

Rare is the museum that’s bona fide fun, but this place is a clear exception—and by no means do you have to be a country fan to enjoy it. General admission starts at \$26, but it’s worth it to add on the extras, such as a tour of RCA Studio B or the famous press at Hatch Show Print. On May 25 the museum unveils a new exhibit called *Outlaws & Armadillos: Country’s Roaring ’70s*.

HONKY-TONK TUESDAY NIGHTS AT AMERICAN LEGION POST 82

3204 Gallatin Pike

A relatively new addition to the local must-do list, Honky-Tonk Tuesday Nights are already a classic. Every Tuesday at eight p.m., old vets, Nashville scene makers and aspiring musicians gather at the American Legion to drink, hear live music and do the two-step in an atmosphere that can only be described as one of a kind. (The Valentine’s Day party felt like a hybrid *Blue Velvet*–*Dazed and Confused*–*Tender Mercies* scene.)

THE STATION INN

402 12th Avenue South

Situated down in the Gulch—the beating heart of Nashville—the Station Inn is absolutely



Clockwise from top left: Inside Ryman Auditorium; axes at Gruhn Guitars; fine fare at Rolf and Daughters.

ARTWORK ON OPPOSITE PAGE BY CORY WASNEWSKY AT HATCH SHOW PRINT, NASHVILLE, TN ©2018. THE CUSTOM POSTER WAS CREATED WITH HAND-CARVED WOODEN BLOCKS ON ONE OF AMERICA’S OLDEST OPERATING LETTERPRESSES.



TRAVEL



Clockwise from top left: Getting inked at Slumerican Made; meat-and-three at Arnold's Country Kitchen; the cozy Germantown Inn; live music at the Station Inn.

the place to hear true bluegrass. Serving bar snacks and beer, it's one of the last venues in the world that's preserving the music of that old, weird America. Acts you might catch in late spring include Danny Paisley and the Southern Grass, Junior Sisk and Ramblers Choice, and Caitlin Canty. Sunday nights at the Station Inn are dedicated to bluegrass jam sessions—and they're free.

MCKAY BOOKS

636 Old Hickory Boulevard

A quirky catchall come to life, McKay's is an enormous warehouse full of previously loved items at great prices—a discount store packed with treasures you didn't know you wanted. (Where else can you find a cowbell for six bucks?) Used vinyl starts as low as 25 cents, and customers can turn in their old media for store credit. "If you're a nerd who likes records, books, CDs or games, it's paradise," says Simpkins. "It's like if eBay was a place."

EDGEFIELD SPORTS BAR & GRILL

921 Woodland Street

A local haunt (with some serious dive-bar grit) for young musicians, Edgefield is cheap and wel-

coming and doesn't try too hard. Locals say it's the gathering place of musicians who lead double lives in the service industry. One touring guitarist perfectly characterized the patrons: "They're nine-to-five folks: nine P.M. to five A.M."

ARNOLD'S COUNTRY KITCHEN

605 Eighth Avenue South

Slide your tray down the counter of this steamtable cafeteria and pick your home-cooked protein and trio of sides. "It's a meat-and-three that's also a James Beard Award-winning restaurant," says Tom Osborn, general manager of Easy Eye Sound. "You'll go there and get a roast beef you had six years ago and it tastes exactly the same. It's a unique Nashville thing that they do better than anybody." In business for more than three decades, the mom-and-pop establishment offers classic Southern fare such as fried chicken, fried catfish and fried green tomatoes—plus plenty of lighter options. At less than 11 bucks for a heapin' plate, it's the best deal in town.

SLUMERICAN MADE

1314 Jo Johnston Avenue

Multitask at the new flagship store for Southern rapper Yelawolf's lifestyle brand and music

label. You can buy clothes, get a fade at the barbershop and cop a tattoo all under one roof.

LIVE TRUE VINTAGE

103 22nd Street, Old Hickory

This local favorite boasts a wide but carefully selected variety for all your vintage-clothing and secondhand-vinyl needs. Owner Tammy Pope digs deep for the items that grace her racks and shelves. From old concert tees and loud Hawaiian prints to kitschy whiskey decanters and Southern memorabilia, Live True Vintage is where you'll find your next wardrobe gem or apartment objet d'art.

THE GERMANTOWN INN

1218 6th Avenue North

Opened in 2016, this cozy bed-and-breakfast sits in a building from the 19th century—the perfect mix of antique charm and modern amenities. With just six rooms, each named after an American president, it's an intimate setting that also features a private courtyard and rooftop. And it's all about location: A stay here puts you right next to some of the city's best restaurants and shopping, and it's a short drive downtown.



Eat, Drink and Hear Nashville With Dan Auerbach

Black Keys frontman Dan Auerbach pulled up stakes from his native Akron, Ohio and relocated to Nashville at the height of his band's fame. "I moved here eight years ago to live in a place where there's no state tax," Auerbach jokes. "But seriously, Nashville is where so many of the greatest musicians live."

And with his new Nashville recording studio and record label, Easy Eye Sound (below), Auerbach can welcome them all. "The musicians who make this place what it is are part of Easy Eye Sound—guys like Bobby Wood and Gene 'Bubba' Chrisman of the Memphis Boys, Duane Eddy, Russ Pahl, Pat McLaughlin, Dave Roe and Billy Sanford. It's incredible," Auerbach says. "I couldn't imagine having a studio anywhere else."

Having just wrapped the Easy Eye Sound Revue tour for his album *Waiting on a Song* (the label's first release), Auerbach will likely soon get back behind the sound board—and back to enjoying the charms of his adopted city. He filled us in on three of his go-tos.

FAVORITE RESTAURANT

Brown's Diner, 2102 Blair Boulevard

"Best burger in town—and it's the most like Akron of any location in Nashville." What started in 1927 in a mule-drawn cart has become a much-loved institution. Its famed burger with all the fixings is just \$4.25.

FAVORITE LOCAL BAND

The Memphis Boys

"They are my heroes." The legendary session musicians have played with everyone from Elvis to Smokey Robinson.

FAVORITE BAR

Robert's Western World, 416 Broadway

"I saw my first show in Nashville there when I was 18, and the only thing that has changed is the urinal cakes." Enjoy live music every day of the week with zero cover charge.





SEX

Rethinking the FEMALE ORGASM

*Guys, it's time to get smart about getting her off. Here, the authors of vagina bible **The Wonder Down Under** offer five tips that will ensure mutual O-faces every time*

BY ELLEN STØKKEN DAHL & NINA BROCHMANN

Imagine going out with an attractive woman. An unmistakable sexual tension builds throughout the cocktails, dinner and sparkling repartee. By the time you reach your apartment, you're both so eager that you skip the foreplay and go straight to the sex. Afterward she seems pleased, even satisfied, but know this: No matter how long you kept at it, it's highly unlikely that the old in-out made her come.

Relax. There's nothing wrong with your manhood; you're just spending too much energy in the wrong place. For hetero couples, intercourse is commonly seen as the main act, but outside of bad porn, most women don't achieve orgasms from vaginal penetration alone. In reality, only about one in four women works this way.

A woman's ability to come during intercourse is a matter of chance: If the outer part of her clitoris is closer to the vaginal opening, a woman is more likely to orgasm from sex alone. But regardless of this anatomical lottery, you have the power to take a woman to Pleasure Town as many times as she wants. Read on.

Set the Stage

Most men experience the spontaneous desire for sex, but only about 15 percent of women do. The rest have *responsive* desire, which means they're dependent on a sexual or romantic situation to feel ready for sex. These women need mental foreplay, so put away your smartphone, clear your schedule and create the right atmosphere before making your move.

Focus on the Foreplay

The clitoris is often perceived as simply a



cute little knob at the top of the vestibulum, the area between a woman's genital lips. In reality, the clitoris—not the vagina—is a woman's main sexual organ. The glans clitoridis is equivalent to the glans penis (the tip), and most women need direct stimulation of their glans to orgasm. This means you should forget the vagina for a moment and touch and lick the clit. If more hetero couples took foreplay more seriously, the 75 percent of women who don't easily come from penetration could enjoy mutually climactic sex.

Slow Your Roll

The glans clitoridis has around 8,000 nerve endings, the same as the glans penis—but

because the clitoral head is so much smaller, the concentration of nerve endings is higher. This makes the clitoris more sensitive than anything on the male body, and it means that the veil separating pleasure from discomfort is really thin. So be gentle. Not all pressure is good pressure; if you stimulate the clitoris too eagerly, the nerve endings will become overwhelmed and simply stop relaying messages to the brain. At that point, the only thing that helps is to take a break. To avoid hitting the mute button, try indirect stimulation, play with different pressures and use lubricant to minimize friction.

Let the CAT In

Missionary fans rejoice: With the coital alignment technique, or CAT, you might just get your partner to orgasm via penetration. The CAT is the sexual position with the highest orgasm rate for women during intercourse alone.

The idea is to stimulate the clitoris with your pelvic bone. Your pelvises need to be close together, and the movement is more about rubbing or sliding against each other than thrusting: back and forth instead of in and out. The position takes study and practice, but trust us—it's time well spent.

Talk Dirty

Aside from anatomical savvy, the surest path to a great sex life is communication. Talk about sex with your partner, make sure to listen and relay what you want. Studies show that couples who speak openly about their desires are more content with their sex lives and their relationships in general. And couples who communicate have more sex too. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY PETITES LUXURES

A close-up, high-angle shot of a woman lying on her back on a dark, wet rock. Her eyes are closed, and her head is tilted back. Her skin is glistening with water droplets, particularly on her face and chest. Her arms are raised above her head. The lighting is bright and natural, creating strong highlights and shadows.

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SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS



DATA



FOUND A MISTAKE HAVE I, JEDI?

Krieg der Sterne

5/4/2005: date of the inaugural Star Wars Day following a German TV channel's incorrect translation of the famous Star Wars quote "May the force be with you" to

"WE ARE WITH YOU ON MAY 4TH"

CINCO Sales

The highest-selling categories of Cinco de Mayo food fare, in millions

\$98: tortilla chips
\$29: avocados
\$22: salsa
\$12: corn
\$8: limes



HERE COMES The SUN

24: number of hours of sunlight at the North Pole on the summer solstice, which falls on June 21 this year

LEST we FORGET



102: members of the 115th U.S. Congress who have served in the military (that's 18.8%)

42,000,000+: number of U.S. veterans who have served during wartime

\$138,000,000+: estimated value of items lost on Memorial Day weekend



155,000: AVERAGE NUMBER OF GUESTS ATTENDING "THE MOST EXCITING TWO MINUTES IN SPORTS"

DERBY DATA

1: number of sitting presidents who have attended the Kentucky Derby (Richard Nixon in 1969)

120,000+: number of mint juleps served at Churchill Downs over Kentucky Oaks and Kentucky Derby weekend

The SOUNDS OF SILENCE

BLAH BLAH BLAH



Artists who have asked Donald Trump not to play their music at political events:

ADELE, QUEEN, PAUL RODGERS, R.E.M., THE ROLLING STONES, TWISTED SISTER, STEVEN TYLER, NEIL YOUNG, GEORGE HARRISON (via his estate), LUCIANO PAVAROTTI (via his widow)

Compelling MISSPELLINGS

Most commonly misspelled Pornhub searches in the 10 most populous U.S. states:

California, New York, Georgia: "PORN" (PORN)
Texas: "LEBSIAN" (LESBIAN)
Florida: "WBONY" (EBONY)
Pennsylvania, Illinois: "HENTI" (HENTAI)
Ohio: "MIFL" (MILF)
North Carolina: "AMATUUR" (AMATEUR)
Michigan: "CARTON" (CARTOON)

MOM MATH

85.4: estimated number of moms in the United States
9.8: number of single moms in the United States in 2016 (UP FROM 7.7 MILLION IN 1985)
5.0: number of married stay-at-home moms in the United States in 2016

DAD DATA

72.2 MILLION: estimated number of fathers in the United States
2 MILLION: number of single fathers in 2016
209,000: number of married stay-at-home dads in 2016

Jerry and CARRIE



SEINFELD ended 20 years ago this May.
SEX AND THE CITY debuted 20 years ago this June.

STATE OF THE DATE

4X: increase in 18- to 24-year-olds who now report using mobile dating apps since 2013
16: percentage of Americans who agree with the statement "People who use online dating sites are desperate"





MUSIC

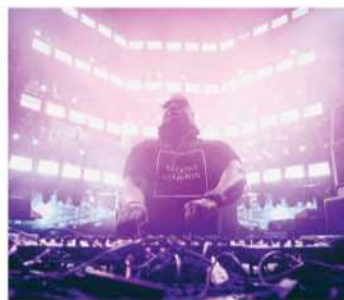
EXPAND YOUR MUSIC-FESTIVAL PALATE

We'll always have a soft spot for big-box summer fests, but the five gatherings here will reacquaint you with the wild spirit that inspired them in the first place

Before it became a molly-addled millennial rite of passage, the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival debuted in 1999 as an anti-corporate utopia uniting ravers, indie-rock connoisseurs, underground hip-hop heads and the occasional part-time shaman. Lollapalooza, launched eight years earlier, was a traveling alternative nation catering to the pierced and tattooed before those styles became freshman-dorm clichés. And Bonnaroo, the youngest of the three, first gained fame for its all-night jams and back-to-the-land vibes. While each attracted slightly different subcultures, they collectively expressed a genuine passion for music free of commercial compromise.

These days, you'd be forgiven for thinking the music festival has gone the way of the fast-food chain. Almost entirely owned by AEG and Live Nation, America's biggest fests are booked by a handful of big-name agencies that place their clients in a lucrative summer-long game of musical chairs. The events are frequently overcrowded, overpriced and patrolled by armies of security that can make you feel you're partying in a police state.

Yes, these behemoths will always have their place in the concertgoing bestiary, but the five festivals selected here get by without Heineken Houses, Toyota Tents or wandering Hadids in the VIP area. From music to concessions, meticulous curation sustains the subversive and singular ethos of the best music fests—a tradition that started with



Monterey Pop and took a strange turn early in this decade, right around the time the 2Pac hologram met its maker.

FORM ARCOSANTI (May 11–13, Arcosanti, AZ)

Curated by avant-garde electronic trio Hundred Waters, Arcosanti offers communion in an experimental Arizona desert town rooted in the concept of arcology (architecture plus ecology). Alumni include Skrillex, Father John Misty and Solange, and prospective guests of the 21-and-up event have been asked a battery of questions, including “What inspires you?” We don’t know what happens if you answer incorrectly; it’s possible you’ll be deported to a Cinnabon in Scottsdale.

Key acts: Chance the Rapper, Charli XCX, Beach House, Fleet Foxes

LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE (May 23–28, Bradley, CA)

Built on a “core ethos centered on sustainability, harm reduction and cultural respect,” this nearly week-long bass bacchanalia is the closest thing you’ll find to Burning Man—if Burning Man were family-friendly, set on a lake and didn’t run on the barter system. Between sets, you’ll find yoga, guided philosophical discussions, arts workshops and miscellaneous quests for chemically aided enlightenment.

Key acts: Anderson .Paak, Fever Ray, Zhu, Tune-Yards

MOVEMENT ELECTRONIC MUSIC FESTIVAL

(May 26–28, Detroit, MI)

Held every Memorial Day weekend in America’s most soulful city, Movement splices Detroit’s techno mastery with hip-hop, modern jazz and genre-flouting big-tent specta-

cle. Think Electric Daisy Carnival for people whose worst nightmare is going to Electric Daisy Carnival. **Key acts:** Diplo, Wu-Tang Clan, DJ Premier, BadBadNotGood, Carl Craig

Eaux Claires

(July 6–7, Eau Claire, WI)

“In many ways, we’ve become the anti-music festival music festival.” That’s how the National’s Aaron Dessner once described Eaux Claires, the two-day blowout he has curated for the past four years with Bon Iver’s Justin Vernon. Emphasizing collaboration among artists, their rural Wisconsin reverie eschews corporate sponsors and traditional lineups in favor of local breweries and outside-the-box programming (literary readings, dance troupes, a living room in the forest). Consider it the only festival on earth where you might catch folk legend John Prine and Danny Brown in the same weekend.

Lineup to be announced

PICKATHON

(August 3–5, Happy Valley, OR)

The dream of the ’90s is alive at Pickathon, situated amid the sprawling farms and woodlands just east of Portlandia. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, it’s as environmentally conscious as a Lisa Simpson vegan potluck: You’re given a token to exchange for reusable plates and cups to use for the duration of the festival. There are stages made entirely of sticks, gargantuan singing mushrooms in the woods and an arboreal reading room—the ideal respite from the blistering psych-rock, eccentric folk and Ethiopian jazz on offer.

Key acts: Broken Social Scene, Built to Spill, Milo, Tinariwen

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE; MOVEMENT ELECTRONIC MUSIC FESTIVAL; Eaux Claires; PICKATHON



TV

WORD WARRIOR

From *Shondaland* to the stage, **Anna Deavere Smith** is delivering some of the most vital performances of our time. Her weapon of choice: an ear for American voices

BY **CLAIRE LOBENFELD**

It's a crisp March afternoon, and Anna Deavere Smith is two pages into a biography of Ella Fitzgerald. "I can't sing," she says, "so I'm interested in singers." I've just joined her at a restaurant in the Beverly Hills Hotel, and already the 67-year-old playwright and performer has flashed the self-effacement and avid curiosity that guides her work. Her latest, *Notes From the Field*, is a one-woman show about the pattern of funneling underprivileged schoolchildren straight into juvenile hall, also known as the school-to-prison pipeline. The show, which ran off Broadway for two months in 2016, debuted on HBO in February. A month later, she reappeared as steely clerk Tina Krissman on Shonda Rhimes's new legal drama *For the People*.

With a CV that stretches back to the early 1970s, Smith has dished out Sorkinian tongue-twisters as National Security Advisor Nancy McNally on *The West Wing*, gone head-to-head with a pill-popping Edie Falco on *Nurse Jackie* and played Tracee Ellis Ross's crunchy mom on *Black-ish*. Since 1992 she has been crafting and performing one-woman shows that probe some of America's most polarizing crises. *Fires in the Mirror*, her Pulitzer-nominated debut, investigated the racial tensions between black





and Orthodox Jewish residents of a Brooklyn neighborhood. She was later commissioned by the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles to create *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, a sweeping look at the riots that followed the acquittal of LAPD officers charged with beating Rodney King. With *Notes From the Field*, her initial goal was to investigate racism and poverty in her hometown of Baltimore. In each case, what makes Smith's shows so effective is her commitment to inhabiting other lives in a way that theater is uniquely equipped to facilitate: "I'm taking a tape recorder, going around and seeing if I can get over any kind of limitations of my race, my gender and my age in order to experience America from the point of view of people very different from me."

Smith interviews upward of a few hundred people per project, developing what she says is more a "tapestry" than a conventional story line. The resulting work goes far beyond the sum of its parts. Minimal costuming and props (glasses and hoodies, cell phones and coffee

narrative show about the U.S. presidency, which she researched in part by going on the road with both Bill Clinton and Bob Dole during the 1996 presidential campaign. (Presidents have become something of a regular feature in Smith's life: In 2013 she received a National Humanities Medal from Barack Obama.)

For *Notes From the Field* she interviewed more than 250 subjects to unpack how troubled students, particularly young people of color and indigenous heritage and in areas of poverty, go from acting up in class to getting trapped in America's carceral state. Smith consulted everyone from Sherrilyn Ifill, president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, to Niya Kenny, the Spring Valley High student who filmed a female classmate being dragged out of her chair by an on-campus cop. Nearly all the monologues share a sense that disadvantaged students are by and large denied the understanding and complexity enjoyed by their more mainstream peers. What started as a project about law enforcement in

there has ever been a black woman with the type of influence she has."

The growing access black women have to public creative outlets is a recurring theme in our conversation. She perks up at the mention of *Insecure* creator and star Issa Rae and suggests that if Toni Morrison were starting out now she would dominate prestige drama television. Even at the beginning of 2018, we are in a remarkably fertile moment for black women of all stripes expressing themselves in public: *Master of None*'s Lena Waithe debuted her hour-long drama *The Chi* in January; books such as Ijeoma Oluo's *So You Want to Talk About Race* and Brittney Cooper's *Eloquent Rage* offer new—and accessible—perspectives on black lives.

But the stories about young black girls in *Notes From the Field* show just how much further we have to go. Once again, it comes down to language. "There's a cop that says it best," Smith says while describing the 2015 incident at a pool party in McKinney, Texas during which a

"I'VE REALLY BEEN TRYING TO BECOME AMERICA, WORD-FOR-WORD."

mugs) mark obvious physical differences, but it's Smith's granular study of voice that brings each character roaring to life. No slang goes unuttered; no vocal cadence isn't hers to master. Therein lies the power of her work: "My grandfather, when I was a child, said, 'If you say a word often enough, it becomes you.' And so I've really been trying to become America, word-for-word."

Smith became interested in the potency of speech—"how Shakespeare's language could deliver not just content but identity"—during her training at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. "I started studying everything I could that had to do with expression of language," she says, "anything that required a speaker to not just give information but to influence and sway the audience." Political rhetoric became a pillar of her studies, particularly recordings of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and JFK. Politicians informed her third one-woman play, *House Arrest*, a non-

her hometown became an opportunity to examine the whole country—a country hobbled by prejudice so deep that it's become reflexive.

So why, with a message that urgent, would an artist of Smith's soaring ambition choose theater?

"When I was younger I was like, 'I cannot just wait around for them to put me in the Glamorama,'" she says, referring to her short-lived stint on *All My Children* and the salon on that show. "I'd better spend my time figuring out how to practice this craft that I care about, or this is gonna be bad." I always sort of regret that I didn't try to make my career in television bigger, for a lot of reasons: influence, a bigger platform. But I'm not a TV warrior."

She has a lot of respect for her *For the People* co-stars such as Hope Davis, but she's particularly mesmerized by the power of television writers, especially the ones she has encountered in Shondaland. "I think Shonda is a historic phenomenon," she says. "I don't think

black teenage girl dressed only in a bikini was thrown to the ground and restrained by a police officer. "He walks over to that group of girls and says, 'If you don't stop running your mouth....' That's the thing I have always felt anxious about as a black woman."

Smith watched the video many times that summer. To her, it represented more than just police brutality; it was a visual testimony that being black and female means you're not allowed to be three-dimensional—carefree, messy, young. "It's one thing if a black woman is saying words from a script in a movie or television show," she says. "But if it's the words coming out of your own mouth? You'd really better watch yourself."

Against that constant threat, Smith has found a way to confront an unjust world in its own language. Her recent successes, spanning theater, cable and prime-time broadcast TV, suggest that the world might finally be ready to listen. ■



POLITICS

We Demand a Recount

The specter of Russian hacking is blinding us to a homegrown threat to our democracy: our refusal to verify election results

We are a nation that refuses to double-check. To do so in the aftermath of an election is often seen as an assault on that election's integrity, an insult to the fine, hardworking bureaucrats who orchestrate the voting process and an unpatriotic gambit attempted only by sore losers. It is also a key reason American democracy is so vulnerable to attack.

With the midterms drawing ever nearer, the mounting evidence of Russia's social-media influence campaign in 2016 is focusing attention on election integrity. But after that historic showdown, efforts to recount three states that went surprisingly and narrowly for Donald Trump were stymied by legal challenges and subjected to mockery from both sides of the aisle. Since then, several state legislatures have made it even more difficult to double-check election results despite 2016's foreign meddling and cyberattacks. By now, virtually all saboteurs of democracy know we're too fussy, impatient and fragile to allow for a secondary process to rule out interference or error.

"People say we shouldn't do anything that could decrease public trust in our elections," says Philip Stark, associate dean of mathematical and physical sciences at the University of California, Berkeley and an appointed member of the board of advisors of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. "That's putting trust before trustworthiness instead of trustworthiness before trust. What we really ought to have is a demonstrably *trustworthy* process."

Stark has long beat the drum about one such process: the risk-limiting audit, or RLA. Its beauty, as described in a landmark 2012 white paper he co-wrote, is that it requires a count of a relatively small number of randomly chosen ballots to provide a high statistical certainty that the overall tally is accurate. When margins are large, the number of hand-counted ballots in an RLA can be tiny: In Missouri, where Trump beat Hillary Clinton by 19 points, a 95 percent probability that the results are correct can be reached by looking at just 10 randomly chosen paper ballots. In Michigan, where the 2016 margin was 0.3 percentage points, a look at 517,000 of the 4.7 million votes cast could do

it. If the outcome from the RLA mirrors what the machines counted on election night, the audit ends. If it doesn't, auditors count more randomly chosen ballots until statistical certainty is achieved. The process leads to a full manual recount only if there continue to be reasons to suspect the original tally is wrong.

"If you want to know if a pot of soup is too salty, you stir the pot and taste a tablespoon," Stark explains. "It doesn't matter if it is a one-quart pot or a 50-gallon cauldron; a tablespoon is enough, provided you stir the pot really well. That is exactly what random sampling does."



RLAs are far easier, faster and cheaper than the only tool now available by law in most states: a manual recount of every ballot, demanded, and sometimes paid for, by a losing candidate. National-security and election-integrity experts argue that making RLAs common practice would reduce the odds of attackers successfully manipulating the results via electronic means. "You cannot make a system invulnerable to cybersecurity attacks, and cybersecurity is only one cause of inaccurate election outcomes," Stark says. But with RLAs, "it really doesn't matter whether the comput-

ers were programmed incorrectly or if they were hacked or if voters didn't follow instructions or whatever. If you've got the paper, you can check the results."

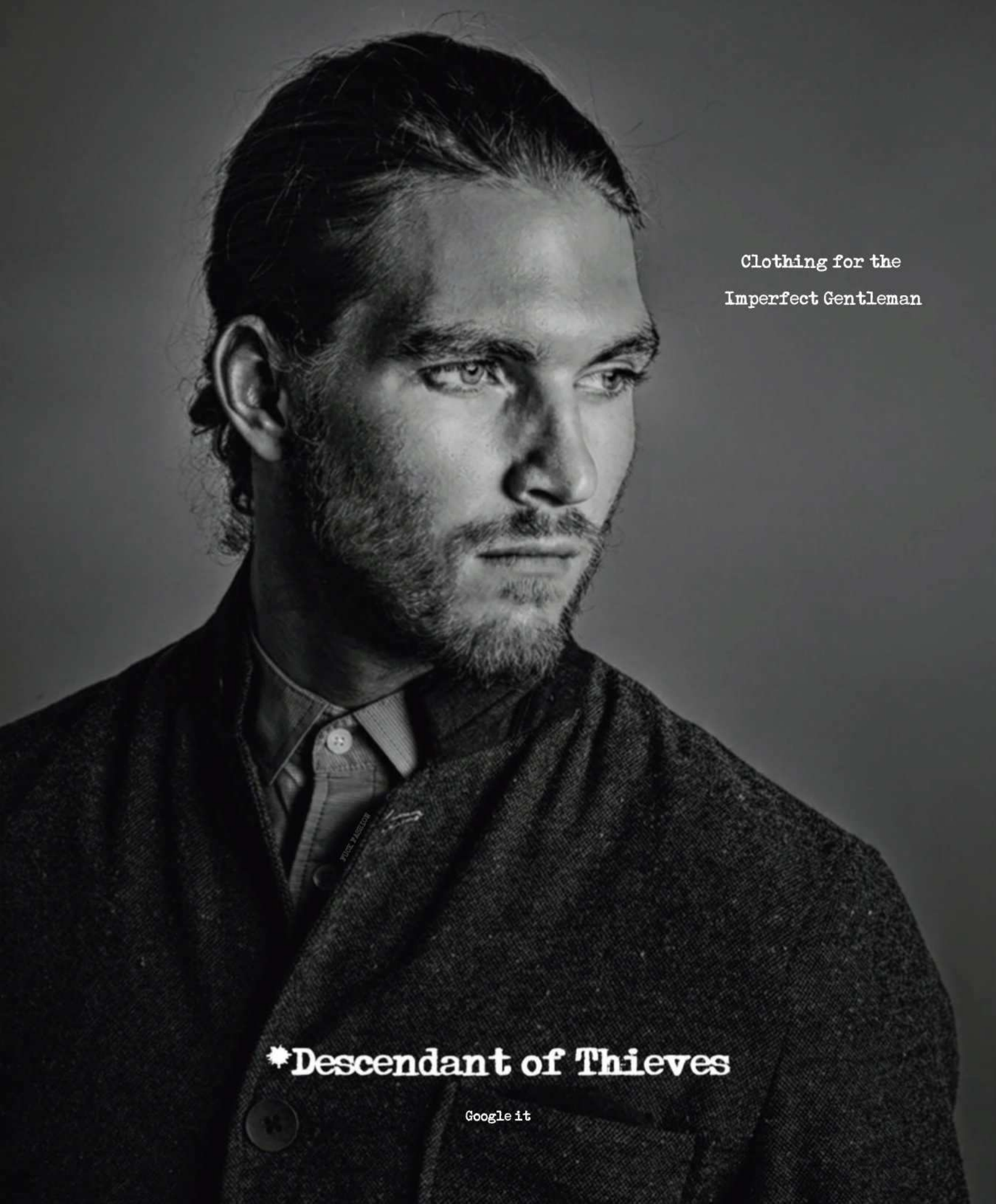
Skeptics insist on evidence of problems to justify post-election scrutiny, but in most situations the only way to find evidence of problems is to conduct an audit. "The paper ballot is the safeguard in this system," says University of Michigan computer science professor J. Alex Halderman, who led the 2016 recount effort, "but only if we look at it."

Recount resistance is a bipartisan problem. In 2016, North Carolina was not among the states targeted by the recount effort despite Trump's narrow, poll-defying victory and credible concerns of aberrant results in some key counties. Democrats in the Tar Heel State opposed a full statewide recount for fear it could upend the outcome of the governor's race in which Democrat Roy Cooper unseated incumbent governor Pat McCrory, a Republican, by 0.2 percentage points. "If you've been elected by the current system of counting votes," Stark says, "there's a tendency to believe it worked just fine."

Still, RLAs have a shot. With much fanfare, Colorado began double-checking outcomes of statewide races in 2017 (and found no errant results). Rhode Island will start RLA testing as soon as this year, and California conducted small-scale RLA experiments in 2011 and 2012, funded by the federal commission that Stark sits on. Officials in Virginia and the District of Columbia have asked Stark about adopting the system, he says.

Meanwhile, many Americans struggle to understand the difference between Russia's social-media influence campaign and actual computer hacking, so Stark and others hope to wake up the public to the dangers of shirking recounts. "There's a sense in which the chaos around the 2016 election has been a godsend for election integrity," Stark says. "All of a sudden a bunch of people care about the issue." Indeed, the attacks might even lead Americans to apply to their own system a Soviet proverb often cited at the height of the Cold War: *Doveriyai, no proveriyai*. Trust, but verify. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY THE PROJECT TWINS



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*Descendant of Thieves

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Playboy Advisor

Sex columnist Anna del Gaizo on a very special species: sexually aggressive women. Plus, the new rules of pursuing sex in the era of #MeToo and a primer on at-home mixology



Q: *I recently found myself unable to get hard after my girlfriend forcefully grabbed my crotch in the car and tried to go down on me. I hate it when women are overly sexually aggressive, because I enjoy the hunt—that is, I like making the first move to initiate sex. Does my boredom with women who are fearlessly forward make me a bad “male feminist,” a douchebag or just your typical guy?—B.S., Springfield, Illinois*

ILLUSTRATION BY ZOHAR LAZAR



A: Antiquated notions about human biology would have you believe that only men hunt and only women nest. Modern iterations of feminism say women should make the first move—or, at the very least, not be shy about doing so. The truth is somewhere in the middle, which means quality sex, from foreplay to finish, is about finding the right personality dynamics. That means gender shouldn't determine which of us prefers to hunt and which prefers being hunted.

Now, to address your question, how sexually aggressive are we talking? Is she leaning in for a kiss and grabbing your crotch, or grabbing your crotch without warning? Some dudes like an aggressive girl; perhaps her exes were some of those dudes. Others don't. Some girls get off on a guy calling them a dirty slut. Others don't. And it's all perfectly fine! If you're not hurting her (unless she explicitly wants you to, of course) and both parties are pleased with the sex, the mechanics behind your relationship is no one else's business. That's why I question why you think your sexual preferences have anything to do with feminism or masculinity. I suggest losing the identity politics and finding a woman who prefers to be submissive, because you're obviously a dom. And you should own that. There's nothing wrong with liking what you like and, more important, embracing what you like. That's sexy.

By the way, *male feminism* is a troublesome term. Feminism is defined as equality of the sexes, despite the root of the word itself, so tacking on *male* nullifies it. The only bad male feminist is the kind of guy who wears a T-shirt emblazoned with MALE FEMINIST and goes around punching women in the vagina. If a man enjoys getting pegged by a dominatrix who's dressed like a lumberjack, does that make him a good male feminist? Nope. It means he has specific proclivities. So while you may be a little naive—by “typical guy” I guess you mean you like watching sports, drinking beer and hitting your local Hooters every once in a while—you're not necessarily a bad feminist.

Q: *What's a go-to cocktail I can master at home that almost any woman would not just be impressed by but actually drink?*—P.G., Reno, Nevada

A: There's nothing sadder than having people over and being unable to offer them a proper drink because your fridge is stocked solely with crusty lo mein leftovers and a single bottle of Coors Light. A magnum of Dom, a bottle each of a mid-priced red and white and a fully stocked bar complete with dry vermouth, bitters and all the

accoutrements will make your home a prime after-hours spot—but for a beginner, you need just a few items to impress. Keep good-quality bottles of tequila, vodka and whiskey, along with 10-ounce bottles of club soda and a few limes, and you're set. (Remember to refill that old ice tray.) Make a balanced pour, and you're golden. If she refuses tequila because she drinks mezcal now, she may not deserve your hospitality.

Q: *I once read that there was an over-the-counter drug that greatly increases the amount of sperm a man produces. Is there any truth to the idea that a guy can increase his load?*—M.M., Anaheim, California

A: There are many ways to increase the volume of your ejaculate, but they don't include over-the-counter supplements. For one, there's no published clinical research proving OTC dugs actually work in this arena. If you really want to make your money shot more climactic, let your body, not your wallet, do the work. Pause your masturbation routine for a few days. The amount of semen you produce is directly proportional to the level of liquid you ingest. Ejaculate is water-based, so start slamming as much water as possible, and lay off the booze, which dehydrates you. Even worse, alcohol lowers your sperm count and decreases its quality—and why shouldn't quality be just as important as quantity here?

You should also avoid hot tubs, saunas, steam rooms, heated car seats, tight underwear and sitting with your legs crossed, all of which can reduce the amount of cum you produce. Testicles are situated outside your body because sperm needs to be at a lower temperature than your body (which is 98.6°F) to function and flourish. Finally, don't compare your load with those of porn stars. Some men simply produce more semen than others, and those are often the men you see in porn. Which brings me to my question for you: Why do you want to increase your sperm load? If it's because you want to accomplish a porn-esque money shot, you better make sure your lover is on board with facials first.

Q: *It used to be a guy could invite a woman back to his place after a date for a nightcap or coffee or to watch a movie if he wanted to, you know, extend the evening. But in a time of #MeToo, can you ask a woman over without being accused of acting inappropriately?*—J.K., Naperville, Illinois

A: You have reason to be apprehensive. Everyone knows asking someone to your place is code for sex, so you're better off

being forthright. When you're just getting to know a woman, you have no idea what makes her tick, what triggers her or what she considers an affront to her self-respect. There's a fine line between creepy and cute, and appropriateness is subjective. (Aziz Ansari's #MeToo moment is proof of this.) If you have to ask, “Is this inappropriate?” it probably is. Then again, I'd like to meet a woman who would accuse you of being out of line for asking her to hang out in your apartment—though I do know a few who might call you a dork. Forget the ruse of a cup of coffee or watching an episode of *Queer Eye* on Netflix, especially at 11 P.M. on a weeknight. It's not as coy as you think. Let things flow naturally, gauge your dynamic and, most vitally, listen to what she has to say. Make sure you have her consent; the whole “Her words said no, but her body said yes” argument will definitely win you a #MeToo moment. After all, when two adults want to have sex with each other, they don't need to pretend otherwise.

Q: *I caught my boyfriend using a sterilizing cleaning product he found under my sink on his penis after sex. (I repeat: my boyfriend, not a one-night stand.) Does this mean he finds me disgusting?*—U.D., Tacoma, Washington

A: This is a leap beyond the postcoital shower, which can also be offensive or at the very least a bummer. To start, you aren't disgusting. Most likely he's grappling with germophobia, paranoia or both. You should start by assessing his reaction to *your* reaction (which I imagine was shock and horror). Did he act like he was doing something as normal as taking a post-sex piss? Was he embarrassed because he knows dousing his manhood in a substance used to break down oven grease is a weird thing to do? This situation is more about him than you, so do the mature thing: Tell him he probably already has herpes. Just kidding! Calmly tell him you're concerned and perhaps a little bothered by it. If he gets defensive or freaks out, show him the door or tell him to get help. Or both.

Only you should determine what your dealbreakers are, though his behavior to me signifies some deep-rooted issues with intercourse. Either that, or he suspects you're promiscuous—and unsafe—and he'd rather risk a violent allergic reaction than the sexually transmitted infection he fears you may have given him. As a responsible person, all you can do is ask him to be honest about his feelings—and to respect yours.

Questions? E-mail advisor@playboy.com.



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**PLAYBOY
INTERVIEW:**

CECILE RICHARDS

A candid conversation with the Planned Parenthood president on holding one of the most controversial jobs in America and the battles she'll face once she steps down

Few jobs in America invite more conflict than the one Cecile Richards has held for more than a decade. As president of Planned Parenthood since 2006, she is viewed as either a champion of women's rights or a baby murderer, a savior or evil incarnate. It all depends on the color of your politics. But red or blue, it helps to hear Richards out, if only to test the edge of your razor-sharp opinions on subjects such as sex education, HIV treatment, transgender health care and the most volatile topic of all, abortion.

Richards is stepping away from her position even as her biggest battles are escalating. A pro-life White House is determined to protect the sanctity of the "unborn" while progressive minions rally in seas of pink pussy hats. Add in the #MeToo movement and a sense that our nation is irreconcilably divided on issues such as birth control and immigration reform, and you

can see why Richards will stay busy long after her exit in May.

Her opposition might best be described as volcanic. In 2015, after a secretly recorded video surfaced of a Planned Parenthood official purportedly discussing the sale of aborted fetal tissue, Richards endured more than four hours of brutal questioning by congressional Republicans who wanted to cut nearly half a billion dollars in annual federal funding for Planned Parenthood. The deceptively edited video was found to be part of a smear campaign, and congressional and state probes into the charges found no wrongdoing by Planned Parenthood, though the Trump administration has indicated it may conduct a further review.

Richards, 60, clearly thrives under such pressure. At five-foot-10 and with short platinum-blond hair, she exults in her role as

professional rabble-rouser—hence the title of her new memoir, *Make Trouble*. It's a personality trait she shared with her late mother, the Texas politician and all-around-firebrand Ann Richards, who famously skewered George H.W. Bush in her keynote address at the 1988 Democratic National Convention with the bon mot "He was born with a silver foot in his mouth."

Cecile Richards was born in Waco in 1957, the oldest of Ann's four children with her husband, David, a prominent civil rights attorney. The family moved to Dallas and later to Austin, the only hospitable place in Texas for a household of liberals who, as Richards puts it, "never backed away from a righteous fight." In ninth grade she got in trouble for wearing a black armband to protest the Vietnam war. "My parents couldn't have been prouder," she says. A life of activism followed. Richards skipped commencement



"The question is, do people believe that women should make their own decisions in consult with their doctors, or do we think that should be government's decision?"



"In a lot of states and communities, Planned Parenthood is probably one of the few places men can go where there's no judgment, just straight-up health care."



"If I could go back in time and give some advice to my teenage self, consent would be a big part of it: Your body is yours. You get to decide what you do with it."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIGITTE LACOMBE



exercises at Brown University to unfurl a FREE SOUTH AFRICA banner and spent the early years of her marriage to Kirk Adams—they now have three grown kids—organizing unions for nursing-home and hotel workers.

After returning to Texas to help her mother become elected governor of that state, Richards founded America Votes with the goal of rallying more citizens to the polls. She also served as deputy chief of staff to Nancy Pelosi in her role as House Democratic whip. In 2006, Planned Parenthood hired Richards as president, and in just over a decade she has grown the organization's corps of volunteers and supporters from 2.5 million to 11.5 million, with 700,000 new donors coming on since the 2016 election—the largest funding surge in Planned Parenthood history. One in five American women uses the organization's services at some point in her life. With these milestones behind her, Richards is turning her focus to getting more women into public office, among other pursuits.

On a cold winter morning in Manhattan, Richards sat down in her spacious Central Park West apartment with journalist **David Hochman**, whose last *Playboy Interview* was with Vox.com's Ezra Klein. Says Hochman, "What struck me most was how human Richards is. She's at the center of so many storms and yet comes across as warm, connected and excited about life. She met me with her little dog, Ollie, in her arms and later became animated talking (with an uptick in her Southern drawl) about her passion for baking pies. Even if you don't agree with Richards's ideas, you might still want to get some Texas barbecue with her."

PLAYBOY: Planned Parenthood has been around for more than 100 years. If your opponents had their way and defunded it, what would that look like for America?

RICHARDS: First, let me clarify and say the phrase *defund Planned Parenthood* is misleading. Planned Parenthood does not get a blank check from the federal government, and there's no line item in the federal budget that goes to Planned Parenthood. We work like other health care providers or hospitals in that we get reimbursed for health care services. We get Medicaid reimbursements for services like birth control, cancer screenings and the testing and

treatment of sexually transmitted infections. More than half our patients, about 1.4 million, are low-income folks who rely on Medicaid for the preventive care that Planned Parenthood provides. In other words, the people who need us most are the folks who already have the least access to care. Take that away and you'll see trouble immediately.

If you chart the country like a heat map, you'll see that the states that make it hardest for women to get care are the ones with the highest



rates of teenage pregnancy, unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV infection. It's unbelievable in the 21st century that we're still fighting for these services, but that's what's happening in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia and my home state of Texas, which is sort of the poster child for everything you can do wrong when it comes to women's health and reproductive health. And it's not just a Southern problem. Ohio is a good example, where they've tried to shut Planned Parenthood out of pretty much everything, and we've had

to sue for services like HIV testing. In Paul Ryan's district in Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood is currently the only option for family planning or women's health for many low-income women. Without Planned Parenthood, you'd see higher maternal mortality rates, repeat teen pregnancies, dangerous abortions—it wouldn't be pretty.

PLAYBOY: What was it like to watch the Mississippi governor sign a bill this year that would ban almost all abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy?

RICHARDS: It's another dangerous bill in a state that's already home to some of the worst health outcomes in the country for women and kids. This law is on top of existing restrictions and the fact that Mississippi is home to only one provider of safe, legal abortion. Many women already must drive for hours or even leave the state to access abortion. It's a dire situation made worse. But it ain't over till it's over, in Mississippi or anywhere else. A lawsuit has already been filed, since the law is unconstitutional. And not long ago, the voters of Mississippi went to the polls and voted down a ban on legal abortion, so I don't believe the governor is representing the needs of women in his state to make their own decisions about their pregnancies. It's a personal issue, and it should be the decision of the pregnant person, not politicians.

PLAYBOY: In your opinion, when does a human life begin?

RICHARDS: This is a debate people have different feelings about based on their religion or their personal feelings. For me, it was when my babies were born, and they've been such an important part of my life. That was it for me.

PLAYBOY: What about from an abortion standpoint?

RICHARDS: I'm not sure what the difference is in that question.

PLAYBOY: Is there any point during pregnancy when an abortion would be terminating a life?

RICHARDS: That's a question medical folks have dealt with, and I'm not a doctor. I've spent a lot of time with ob-gyns, and they will tell you there is no specific moment when life begins. It depends on the pregnancy, and that's frankly why doctors and their patients should be in charge of these decisions and not government. For Planned Parenthood, it depends on the state and what kind of abortion services we provide. We go to whatever the legal limit is, but it isn't the same state by state. [Editor's note: Federal law permits abortion into the third trimester in



certain cases, though the vast majority of abortions are performed within the first 13 weeks.] There are women with really troubled pregnancies, and unfortunately there are very few doctors in America they can go to. This is where there's a real inequity of care. These women are in heartbreaking situations as it is, and then they have to fly across the country to have someone provide them with health care. That seems incredibly cruel, and I'd like it to change.

PLAYBOY: The White House isn't exactly in your corner on any of this.

RICHARDS: Not at all. We knew Planned Parenthood would be a target for this administration, and it really has been. Mike Pence had been the architect of getting rid of Planned Parenthood when he was in Congress, though he was wildly unsuccessful. He introduced the first federal measure to block our patients from care and then introduced something like five more measures. He also signed eight anti-abortion bills into law as governor of Indiana. He's been waiting for this moment. The biggest myth perpetrated by people like Pence is that if Planned Parenthood shut down, these women could simply go elsewhere. That just isn't true. For a lot of women, we're all they've got.

PLAYBOY: The core issue for conservatives is that they don't want federal dollars going to abortion, right?

RICHARDS: As I think most folks know, the federal government does not pay for abortion services at Planned Parenthood or at hospitals except in very limited circumstances. That's per the Hyde Amendment, which has been law for more than 40 years. I disagree with that law, and I think it has prevented low-income women from having all their options available to them; however, it is the law. The reimbursements the federal government provides to Planned Parenthood, or any other hospital or health care provider, are for preventive care: breast exams, cervical cancer exams, family planning, STI testing and treatment—the very things, in many cases, that prevent unintended pregnancy. The question for me is, why single out Planned Parenthood since we abide by the same regulations that every other health care provider in America abides by?

PLAYBOY: Well, Planned Parenthood is often seen as an abortion factory that masquerades as a reproductive-health organization. It's the country's largest provider of abortions, with more than 300,000 procedures done each year. The argument is that if a woman on federal assistance comes in to talk about family planning, the result may very well be an abortion.

RICHARDS: That's no different than it is at any hospital. If a woman on Medicaid goes to a hospital for family planning and they provide a full array of health care options, including

safe and legal abortion, that hospital gets reimbursed for that service, as they should. That's the same thing we do. It's no different. I think the difference is that we're the largest women's health care provider in the country. In my view, if you're a woman on Medicaid, you should have the same rights to whatever health care provider you want as a member of Congress does. That's fair and equal.

PLAYBOY: Maybe the biggest hot-button issue for Planned Parenthood has been the donation of fetal tissue for what's often called stem-cell research. Why is this a cause worth championing?

RICHARDS: For a very long time fetal-tissue research has been important in helping to lead to all kinds of medical advances—everything from vaccines for polio and measles to research on degenerative eye disease, Down syndrome and infectious diseases, to name a few. Almost every family has been helped in some way by

I think there are men, a lot of them in office, who simply don't believe that women should be able to have sex freely.

this research, and there's still much more to do. Fetal-tissue donation is offered only at a limited number of our health centers, but Planned Parenthood is proud to support women who choose to donate fetal tissue, honoring their desire to contribute to potentially lifesaving research and cures.

PLAYBOY: President Trump reinstated the gag rule that blocks foreign aid to any nongovernmental group that discusses abortion. He also appointed officials to the Department of Health and Human Services who are contraception skeptics, right?

RICHARDS: That's right. HHS is a dangerous place right now when it comes to women's health. It's been filled with folks who are not health care experts but instead are anti-choice, religious ideologues. They're rewriting the rules for the [Title X] family planning program to steer it away from birth-control options and more toward what they call "fertility awareness" and the rhythm method. They're doing the same

thing with sex education, basically trying to move back to an abstinence-only mind-set.

PLAYBOY: You have to admit, abstinence is a pretty effective way to avoid getting pregnant.

RICHARDS: Abstinence should always be part of a sex-education program, and we teach it as an option at Planned Parenthood. The problem is, it can't stand on its own. We absolutely believe that young people should know about abstinence, but we also know that young people think about sex, and that at some point they're probably going to be sexually active. If they know only about abstinence and don't know how birth control works, that puts them at a high risk for pregnancy and STIs. People on the right believe that teaching kids about sex leads them to have sex earlier, but no credible study has found that a comprehensive sex education encourages early sexual activity. All the research shows that it delays it, actually. You don't just go out and have sex because you've learned about it in school.

PLAYBOY: Are you suggesting that young people will discover sex on their own?

RICHARDS: Put it this way: I've had three kids. It's not like we as adults created the idea of sex and had to pass that down to them. Kids are already thinking about it. One of the most important things we can do as a society, and as parents, is give young people the information they need about their bodies. I mean, the questions we get at Planned Parenthood in 2018 are just stunning.

PLAYBOY: Give me an example.

RICHARDS: It's misinformation on all levels. People are constantly wondering if they can get pregnant from unprotected sex, and of course the answer is yes. Or someone will say they heard you couldn't get pregnant if you drink Mountain Dew, or

if you stand on your head after sex or during sex. There are a ton of myths out there. We've done a terrible job in this country of talking to young people about the basics of sexuality and about risky behavior. That's why it's so heartbreaking to see a state like Texas no longer participating in the HIV Prevention Program, for political reasons. I mean, who in this country wouldn't want to keep a young person from getting a sexually transmitted infection, particularly HIV, if they could do something about it? This is where politics really gets in the way.

PLAYBOY: Is it politics or God? Aren't religious beliefs and morality shaping these decisions?

RICHARDS: For some these are religious issues, and I have total respect for people whose religious values are that they don't want to talk to their kids about sex or they don't want to use birth control. I have no problem with that. That's their business, but it's not the business of government to put their political values, if you will, or even religious values on anyone



else. I think the mind-set on the right actually goes beyond religion, frankly. It's really about women and sex.

PLAYBOY: Women and sex? Say more.

RICHARDS: I think there are men, a lot of them in office, who simply don't believe that women should be able to have sex freely. They don't think women should control their own bodies, and they're apprehensive about how things are changing for men and women. They're frustrated that women now represent more than half the undergraduate students in this country and half the law students and medical students. Women are everywhere, and for some men that is unsettling. People may think our opponents are rallying around religion, but it's really about control over women's opportunities. These men may not get it, but women get it, trust me.

PLAYBOY: So the trouble comes down to conservative men feeling threatened by women?

RICHARDS: You can look at it practically. Who has been in charge for the past umpteen million years? Not women. As Gloria Steinem always said, no one ever gave up power without a fight. The old guard is scared as women take action like never before. It's such an exciting time to be a woman and to be an activist. Every day, someone comes up to me on the subway or wherever and wants to know what they can do next, how they can get involved. People are fired up. Women are organizing, joining political groups, going to marches, running for office. It's a healthy sign. Women are no longer waiting for instructions or waiting to have all their ducks in a row. This is the time.

PLAYBOY: Trump may be the best thing to have happened to the feminist movement.

RICHARDS: I guess if there is a silver lining—or, as someone called it, a tin lining—to this administration, it's how it has engaged more people than I would ever have imagined. As painful as the months since November 2016 have been, seeing how bad this administration has been for so many people and how they've tried to turn back progress, there's also an undeniable flip side. Trump has lit a fire for millions of people—women, yes, but also men—to step forward, be heard, get involved in fighting back and making trouble, and I'm tremendously optimistic about where we're heading.

The ground is shifting under our feet everywhere, not just in Washington. I've been working on progressive issues or social justice or women's issues my whole life. I've never seen anything like this. It's multigenerational. It's not just young women; it's older women saying, "No way are we going back to those days." One of my favorite signs at marches is the one I see older women carrying that says, **HOW LONG DO**

WE NEED TO KEEP FIGHTING THIS CRAP?

It has been so inspiring to see #MeToo and Time's Up become massive grassroots movements that connect people to a changing of the tide. It may have started in Hollywood, but it has shifted to people around the world standing up for dignity and respect. Once this all gets boiling, that's when you will see real cultural and social change.

PLAYBOY: Getting the birth control benefit covered under Obamacare was a major victory for you. Do you think that legislation will hold up?

RICHARDS: It's so important. It was one of the biggest fights we had at Planned Parenthood, to get birth control available for everybody at no cost, but it happened. Now, more than 55 million women are eligible for no-cost birth control. That really matters, because it gives women freedom regardless of their income level or which state they live in. Birth control is now

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a right in all 50 states under various insurance plans. Yes, it is absolutely something the current administration is trying to roll back, but here's the thing: Once you give 55 million women freedom like this—and these are women from every background and political persuasion—it's hard to take that freedom away. Women started sending us their Walgreens receipts that said "zero co-pay." Once women began to understand this was a benefit they had, they understood what it would mean for the administration and Congress to rescind those rights. That knowledge is energizing women to show up and not just let politics happen to them.

PLAYBOY: More than 500 women are running for office in November, most of them Democrats. What impact might that have?

RICHARDS: It could be huge. Women are a lot more effective once they get in office. They actually get things done. They can work across party lines. Most of them do not do this so they can be called "Congresswoman." They do it because

they need to get things done. Women in office and women running for office have an especially hard burden: not only to get elected but to work twice as hard once they're there—and thank God they do. The ideal vision overall is that we protect the Senate, because I think they're the only rational body holding the line right now. Maybe not so much under Mitch McConnell, but it has generally been the place where you can have high-level conversations about important topics, from immigration to abortion rights. So holding the Senate—getting women in the Senate—is crucial, and I'm also optimistic about the Democrats taking back the House.

PLAYBOY: What is it going to take?

RICHARDS: My biggest interest for November is getting more women to vote. If women voted, even if you added five percent more women to any contest, that could be the tipping balance, and women are poised to do that. They're already

running the phone banks. They're running the get-out-the-vote organizations. Black women in Alabama are a key reason Doug Jones is now in the United States Senate. Women in Virginia did a ton of work in electing a Democrat in the governor's race there, and they helped flip many seats across the country. Especially with so many women running for office, both incumbents and new faces, it feels like this is a singular political moment, and I hope they recognize that. In a funny way, that has been the story for many years; it has just never been told. Women are the reason Barack Obama was re-elected, I believe. He was a great first-term president, but women really fueled his 2012 campaign.

PLAYBOY: What about you? Your former boss Nancy Pelosi said you are so organized as a leader that you could be president.

RICHARDS: And she knows how to butter everybody up.

PLAYBOY: Seriously, is running in 2020 something you'd consider?

RICHARDS: Well, I think I could do a better job than the one who's in there now, for sure. But it's not an aspiration I have. I clearly hope that we elect a woman sometime soon. We're overdue and it's important, and I think we will. As I said, women are the most potent political force in the country right now. If we can get our act together, we could determine everything not only this November but two years from now.

At Planned Parenthood we've done an extraordinary job of engaging women as voters around issues of reproductive rights, but I've also learned that women need much more: They need equal pay, they need affordable childcare, they need paid family leave. So I'm excited about stepping aside from this current job and working on a host of issues that change women's opportunity





in this country. I want to live my values. I spent a lot of time grooming the next generation of leaders. It's hard to do, but you've got to move aside and let one of these amazing people do this, and now I can use my energy and whatever talent I have left to do something else. I've marched. I've organized rallies. I've raised money. I've raised awareness. I've fought Congress. I've done all this, but if we don't shift that into political power and voting, we won't have finished the job. Frankly, if half the members of Congress could get pregnant, we wouldn't be talking about Planned Parenthood. We'd be talking about how we could better fund family planning.

PLAYBOY: Is it true that the number of teen pregnancies in this country is rapidly decreasing?

RICHARDS: It's amazing. I want to shout it from the rooftops. We're at a record low for teen pregnancy in the U.S. We're at a 30-year low for unintended pregnancy in general. We're also at a record low for abortion rates since *Roe v. Wade* was decided.

PLAYBOY: How do you explain that?

RICHARDS: It's a little early, but I think we'll see that it's because more women are eligible for no-cost birth control. Not just that, but there are all kinds of birth control now. You don't just have a pill that you have to remember to take every day. There's the patch, the sponge, the ring, the cervical cap, condoms, female condoms. There are all kinds of choices.

PLAYBOY: What is the most effective form of birth control?

RICHARDS: Well, the most effective one is the one you use, which I guess is an obvious point. But definitely the longer-acting methods like IUDs are highly effective, though not everybody likes them and they don't protect against STIs, which is why we always advocate dual use. Use a method that protects you from unintended pregnancy, and then use a condom to prevent STIs.

PLAYBOY: Why not just make birth control available over the counter?

RICHARDS: We should, and I think in the near future we will. There are over-the-counter pills going through the FDA approval process, which I believe will take another few years. But it's going to happen. I mean, they're sold over the counter around the world. The Plan B pill is available

over the counter now. If you have unprotected sex, you can take what used to be called the morning-after pill as an effective method of preventing an unintended pregnancy. That happened under the Obama administration.

PLAYBOY: What about that long-promised male birth control pill?

RICHARDS: It's not here yet, but I think it's a great idea. My only problem with it is how would you know that the guy took it? I hate to be that way, but men have to be as engaged in birth control and preventing unintended pregnancy as women are, and that's changing. I'm excited about the birth control shot, Depo-Provera. Right now you get it from a nurse or doctor once



every three months, but we just did a clinical trial on a self-injectable that you could take home and do yourself, which is amazing. Studies show that women stay on their birth control at much higher rates if they can take it home.

I also see the abortion pill, which was introduced by Planned Parenthood in the U.S., taking hold. It was developed in the 1980s as RU-486. It's an easy and nonsurgical way for a woman to terminate a pregnancy early on. If you're eight weeks pregnant or less, it works about 98 out of 100 times. At 10 weeks, it works about 93 out of 100 times. Women are already using it overseas. It gives them the ability to take their care into their own hands, particularly in

states where they're making it impossible for women to get to a provider of safe and legal abortion. That technology is only going to get better.

PLAYBOY: You write in the book about your own abortion. What did that experience do to guide you as the head of Planned Parenthood?

RICHARDS: I didn't think about it that much except that, like a lot of women who have either had an abortion or, more important, had children, I became even more adamant about abortion rights. The responsibility of having a child is a lifetime decision. This isn't about having a cute little baby; this is about having a person you're responsible for forever. I didn't realize how important it was to talk about my

own abortion until I did. It's important for people to talk about their abortions because it makes them feel less alone. Women face so much stigma and shame around this decision. But I think that's changing too. We have a long way to go, but folks are coming out with their abortion stories, and that's new. The reproductive-justice community was on this a long time ago, but it's refreshing to see abortion stories in movies that are not hysterical depictions. Jenny Slate's movie *Obvious Child* was the first abortion rom-com, but you're seeing it in television shows too. Shonda Rhimes featured an abortion story on *Scandal*. For Kerry Washington's character to have an abortion and for it to be a matter-of-fact occurrence was huge. I just don't believe we'll have the political change we need until culture aligns and drives it. It will become unacceptable to shame women and act as if abortion isn't

and hasn't always been simply part of our world.

PLAYBOY: We've come all this way, and you haven't used the term *pro-choice* once. Why not?

RICHARDS: I think the *pro-choice*, *pro-life* nomenclature is completely outdated and irrelevant. Those terms were used to create a political binary that's just not where people live. We quit using *pro-choice* at Planned Parenthood because it's a simplification of a complex personal issue, and people don't want to be labeled. Once you get beyond labels, folks' shoulders relax and they can have a conversation.

PLAYBOY: What's your preferred term?

RICHARDS: I don't have one. That's the thing about getting rid of labels: You can't just create



a new one. The question is, do people believe that women should make their own decisions about their pregnancy in consult with their doctors, or do we think that should be government's decision? Overwhelmingly, people do not want government or anyone else to make decisions for them.

PLAYBOY: You grew up in a house where battling for progressive causes was as normal as selling Girl Scout cookies. Was it ever difficult to be in a liberal minority?

RICHARDS: Texas makes it easy for you to be progressive in some ways. My parents were unrepentant liberals in Dallas, which meant we were pretty much against everything that was happening politically. That's what makes me so comfortable in the work I do now. I've always been tilting against the prevailing political climate and conventional wisdom, and I'm grateful to my parents for giving me that. You always lost more than you won, and that was good conditioning.

PLAYBOY: Do you remember your parents giving you "the talk" about sex?

RICHARDS: Barely. My parents weren't typical Texas parents, but they were just as hung-up as everybody else. I do remember my mother trying to draw anatomical things. What's interesting is that when I was growing up in Texas, there was better sex education than there is now. I mean, it was crazy antiquated and taught by coaches in my high school—because every teacher in Texas is a sports coach—but it did the job. Parents are the best at sex education, but a lot of them don't feel equipped or know what to say. They think that with social media and the internet there's too much information out there already, so a lot of parents avoid talking about it. I think the worst thing we can do for kids is pretend sex doesn't exist.

PLAYBOY: How young do you think kids should start learning about sex?

RICHARDS: It should absolutely start in elementary school with age-appropriate material: talking about parts of your body, what to expect from puberty. Certainly by middle school and high school it needs to be discussed in a big way. Again, it doesn't have to happen at home, though I think it should. We teach sex education at Planned Parenthood. Churches and temples teach it. But *somebody* needs to do it. If you don't talk to people when they're young, when are you going to talk to them?

PLAYBOY: Europe seems so much more, shall we say, chill when it comes to matters of sexuality. Anything we could learn from them?

RICHARDS: Well, you look at Europe and see lower rates of every troubling thing we see here

in terms of sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, even abortion rates. In Europe, non-stigmatized sex education begins at a very early age. There's not a lot of debate about whether it works; we know it does. The debate here is whether we're going to let politics and politicians and particularly a bunch of old dudes in Congress decide what and when young people can learn. As with women's health care, these old guys are wildly out of step with the American people. This is not a Republican or Democrat issue. Parents don't want their kids to get pregnant before they're ready to have a family, and they definitely don't want them to get sick when they can avoid it.

PLAYBOY: Help us clarify a few things. Can you get, say, HPV or gonorrhea from a toilet seat?

RICHARDS: That's a popular misconception. People write in to Planned Parenthood's text-

symptoms and lower the chances of passing the virus to other people. The good news is, outbreaks usually become less frequent over time, and though herpes can be uncomfortable, it isn't dangerous. People with herpes have relationships, have sex and live perfectly healthy lives.

PLAYBOY: Most women have orgasms just through vaginal sex, correct?

RICHARDS: Uh, nope. Isn't this **PLAYBOY**? Who told you that?

PLAYBOY: The old joke goes that 80 percent of people masturbate, and the other 20 percent are lying. Planned Parenthood says masturbation has a health benefit. **PLAYBOY** readers are all ears. Do tell.

RICHARDS: I'm tellin' you, masturbation is good for you. There's a lot of research on this out there. Masturbation can release sexual tension, reduce stress, help you sleep better, improve self-esteem and body image, relieve muscle tension.... Should I keep going?

PLAYBOY: We're good, thanks. Last one: If you have an STD, what's the best way to tell your partner or the person you're dating?

RICHARDS: It's no fun to tell the person you're dating that you have an STD, but it's definitely the right thing to do. There's no one way to have this conversation, but here are a few tips. First, stay calm and remember you're not the only one dealing with this; millions of people have STDs, and plenty of them are in relationships. Having an STD is a health issue, plain and simple, and it doesn't mean anything about you as a person. Second, know your facts. There are a lot of myths about STDs out there, so read up on yours and be ready to answer your partner's questions. Third, think about the timing.

Pick a time when you won't be distracted or interrupted, and choose a place that's private. Finally, remember to put your safety first. If you're afraid your partner might hurt you, you're probably better off with an e-mail, a text or a phone call. Some health departments have programs that can let your partners know they were exposed to an STD without giving them your name, unless you want them to. It's totally normal to be worried about how your partner will react, and there's no way around it: They might get freaked out. You might need to give them a little time and space to process the news. And of course Planned Parenthood is a great resource for safe and confidential information, testing, treatment and support.

PLAYBOY: What's your view on the rise of hookup culture? For people under the age of 30 especially, there's a sense that casual sexual encounters are fine.

RICHARDS: One of the things that amazes me when I get questions from young people is how often they ask things like "How do I know if

Men can be advocates for women and feminist activists. That has been another generational change.

chat hotline with questions like this all the time, and our experts at the call center in New York reply in real time. The answer is no.

PLAYBOY: Can you contract HIV by getting a piercing or tattoo?

RICHARDS: Actually, yes. It's possible to spread HIV if your piercer or tattoo artist uses the same needles for different clients, which, obviously, they shouldn't do. So before you commit, find out whether the person uses a new needle for each client and how the needles are sterilized.

PLAYBOY: Is it true you can't get an STI from oral sex?

RICHARDS: Oh, you can definitely get an STI from oral sex. It's a good idea to make sure you're protecting yourself and your partner by using condoms and/or dental dams.

PLAYBOY: You can get herpes only if your partner is having an outbreak, right?

RICHARDS: Herpes can be spread even when there are no visible signs of an outbreak. There's no cure for herpes, but medication can help with



someone really likes me?" I do think young people, even if they're more sexually active today—which, by the way, the research isn't showing to be true—they're looking for the same thing everyone is looking for, which is human connection. There's as much looking for authentic relationships and love as there ever has been. I'm not an expert on the psyche of teens or college students, but research shows that most young people, male and female, regret these experiences in uncommitted relationships. I think it underscores the need for more honest conversations about the results of our sexual behavior and what it means to have an equal and consensual relationship where you're both getting pleasure and having your needs met. It's not just about one person being sexually harassed or coerced; it's about having the right to say what you want.

PLAYBOY: You hear so much talk on college campuses and elsewhere about consent in sexual situations. In your opinion, what are the hallmarks of a consensual relationship?

RICHARDS: Consent is all about setting your personal boundaries and respecting the boundaries of the person you're in a relationship with. If I could go back in time and give some advice to my teenage self, consent would be a big part of it: Your body is yours. You get to decide what you do with it. At Planned Parenthood, there are a few things we talk about when we talk about consent. It's freely given: a choice you make without pressure, manipulation or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. It's reversible: Anyone can change their mind at any time, no matter what. It's informed: You can consent only if you have the full story. It's specific: In other words, saying yes to one thing doesn't mean you've said yes to everything. And it's enthusiastic: When it comes to sex and relationships, you should only do things you want to do, not what you think you're expected to do.

PLAYBOY: Then there's pornography, which permeates our culture like never before. What's that doing for sex?

RICHARDS: That's something we're all trying to figure out. I don't know. The questions to focus on, particularly for young people, are "What is healthy sex?" and "What is consensual sex?" The internet is good for a lot of things, but there's a lot of bad stuff out there as well—violence against women, portrayal of sexual activities that are unsafe and unrealistic. That's one of the reasons we've invested in peer education on sexuality.

When I came to Planned Parenthood about 12 years ago, I met these high school students in Kalamazoo, Michigan. They had learned everything about sex and all the issues we're talking about. They were kind of the Underground

Railroad for sexual information in a place like Kalamazoo. They would talk to teachers about what they knew; they'd go to the school board and fight for sex education. I said, "You're not sex educators; you're our truth tellers." These engaged young people are the future. They began to build a movement within our organization, and it brought kids together across the country, from Kalamazoo, Miami, East L.A. and beyond. There's now an LGBT component and similar groups on other campuses. We began taking them to Congress. There are many doors I can't get into, but you bring a teenager from anyone's congressional district and they'll get a meeting immediately. They can talk about what it means to not have sex education or affordable birth control or just about their lives. You can't say no to these kids. It's like what we're seeing among young people in this country in the wake of the shootings in Florida. The kids

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of this next generation are the best lobbyists I've ever seen. We had young women, teenagers, stand up at town hall meetings and take on U.S. senators over the issue of Planned Parenthood. That's something you never forget.

PLAYBOY: What can the average guy do to support reproductive rights?

RICHARDS: For starters, don't wait for instructions. These are your issues too. I guess I would say women need men's support, and it's not an us-against-them situation. Women are saying we want the same opportunities that men have had. Lots of men understand that. I was so moved by the men who marched last year. I think of my own father, who saw his wife become governor of Texas, which was challenging for him, but he supported her.

I'd also like guys to think that Planned Parenthood is for them too. Men can come in and get STI testing and treatment. We do more than 4 million tests a year. In a lot of states and communities Planned Parenthood is probably one

of the few places men can go where there's no judgment, just straight-up health care. We do vasectomies too. The only time it's hard to get an appointment is March, when many guys get vasectomies so they can sit on the couch and watch March Madness basketball for a week. We also provide LGBT services, and in a number of states we're doing hormone-replacement therapy. It's been incredible to see as we expand transgender care how many people drive across state lines to come to Planned Parenthood. One young man just said to me Planned Parenthood was the first place he went where the medical provider knew more about what he needed than he did. He had to be his own advocate in the health care system.

More broadly, men can be advocates for women and feminist activists. That has been another generational change, which is exciting. So many partners and couples come in together. You see so many men at events and rallies and

public meetings, whether it's about reproductive-care access or abortion rights. The legal right to abortion in this country is as high as it's ever been. I think that's a reaction to what women have done, but also to what good men have done, to fight for these rights. It's why we've had them for more than 40 years.

PLAYBOY: Looking ahead, is there anything you want to do with a little more free time?

RICHARDS: I don't picture myself ever just sitting around. I've been trying to learn Italian. I've been going to sailing classes way up in Maine; I love doing that. There are things I'd love to master as a cook. I've been trying to make a perfect *cacio e pepe* pasta and still have not quite gotten it. I may have to go to Rome for a week to get that done. I've always wanted to go to the Isle of Skye, which I'm doing

this fall just for fun with a friend.

PLAYBOY: And what's your hope for the future of women's rights? Will it always be a fight for reproductive freedom?

RICHARDS: If we're doing the right thing, yeah. If we believe in progress and in taking away barriers, there's always going to be a next fight. As I try to tell people who are discouraged about what's happening right now in this administration, you have to take the long view sometimes. One hundred years ago women couldn't vote, birth control was illegal, women didn't have equal rights. And now women represent half the workforce, they're half the student population, they're taking over government. They're doing things that were unthinkable even 25 years ago. We got birth control covered for every woman, and we've held our ground on abortion rights. Those are big advances. Life is so much better now for women than it ever was before. But we can never stop fighting. If we're a movement, we have to constantly be moving. ■



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The Accidental **POP STARS**

BY **AARON CARNES** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOSHUA ALLEN HARRIS**



MUSIC

Portland stalwarts **Portugal. The Man** march into their first year as Grammy-winning, chart-topping stars. Listen in on one of the most unusual success stories in pop

Two bearded guys in jeans and old T-shirts come down the backstage stairs at the McDonald Theatre in Eugene, Oregon, carrying a hot-dog roller—one of those gleaming, grease-lined contraptions that spin ad infinitum in convenience stores. As they set it up I watch them from the nearby couch I'm sharing with two of the founding members of Portugal. The Man, a band whose eccentric psych-pop has allowed it to float just underneath the mainstream for more than a decade. Last year the group surprised everyone, including themselves, with the massive success of "Feel It Still," an infectious Motown-inspired jam that has garnered praise from the likes of former president Barack Obama, who included it on his "favorite songs of 2017" playlist.

Just a few days earlier, the song had landed the Portland-based group a Grammy for best pop duo/group performance. Now, at the kickoff of their first tour of 2018, they giddily look on as roadies set up their brand-new appliance. If all goes according to plan, it will traverse the globe with them, heating dogs for the band, the crew, the opening acts and whoever else happens to be hanging around.

"Treat yourself," bassist Zach Carothers says.

Singer-guitarist John Gourley, seated on the couch with Carothers and me, has been quiet; he strikes me as shy. But once he gets started, he has a lot to say.

"You're really not going to get a good dog off that for a couple weeks," he says as a crew member loads the rollers. "Got to get a few layers on it first." Gourley has an accent I can't place. Carothers sounds like he grew up in southern California. Of the other band members, second guitarist Eric Howk is in the touring van. (He's been paralyzed from the sternum down since 2007 from a construction-site accident.) Drummer Jason Sechrist is hanging out somewhere, as are vocalist Zoe Manville, Gourley's partner and the mother of their child, and keyboardist Kyle O'Quin. Later, O'Quin tells me the band members used to satisfy their tour cravings by cooking up "bus dogs"—franks boiled in a coffeepot.

Gourley and Carothers, now 36 and 37 respectively, grew up in remote parts of Alaska. Gourley's family moved around, usually relocating every two years to a different secluded part of the state. ("My friends were dogs," he

says.) Carothers lived outside Wasilla, the tiny city most people associate with the Palin family. The two future bandmates met as teens when Gourley's family moved there; they started playing together seriously around 16 years ago, after relocating to Portland.

It makes a certain sense that they would splurge on a hot-dog roller: Facing the kind of fame few bands ever glimpse, they make a point of clinging to the rustic oddities of their past rather than trading up to rock-star cliché. Their clothes suggest broke musicians: Gourley is dressed for the snow—blue winter vest, fluffy Portland beanie—while Carothers wears black sweatpants and a varsity jacket with COACH CAROTHERS emblazoned on it. When I ask about the Grammy win, they both shake their heads.

"Somebody fucked up," Gourley says. Until the moment they walked onstage, he hadn't expected to win. "There's no way you're going to beat Justin Bieber and 'Despacito.' There's no way you're going to beat Coldplay and Chainsmokers. There's no way you're going to beat Imagine Dragons."

But they did, and the group's acceptance speech, which they drafted "just in case," grabbed headlines. Consequence of Sound wrote that they'd "made a mockery" of the win and pointed out that Gourley appeared to wipe himself, onstage, with the trophy. (Gourley disputes this interpretation.) Carothers delivered the speech, wrapping up with a warm "Hail Satan."

"If we win a Grammy as a pop duo or group, a genre that we had no business being in up until last year, we're going to give it up to Satan because that's the only way idiots like this are going to get on that stage," Gourley tells me—kind of laughing, kind of serious. "He's got to have something to do with it."

Many publications failed to notice the thrust of the speech: Carothers paid a nervous, heartfelt tribute to Alaska. He said their heroes were dog mushers and dedicated the award to the kids in the villages ("Shishmaref, Barrow, Bethel") and the state's indigenous people.

"That's who that award should be dedicated to," Gourley says back in the dressing room, "people that don't have

a voice out there." He's suddenly serious, his own voice louder than it had been all afternoon. "It was a really proud moment for us to win a Grammy, coming from all that. It was just sad to see the next day that you're not going to mention any of it."

That wasn't the first time the press misrepresented Portugal. The Man as pretentious, arrogant or out to stir up controversy. I wonder what those writers would think if they saw the band members backstage, feeding the venue staff with their new hot-dog roller.

"Legit, it's awesome for tour," Carothers says, bunning a dog. "We're cooking hot dogs in the dressing room. Look at us. We've *changed*, man." The last statement strikes me as both accurate and ironic: The trappings of success

Opposite page: Portugal. The Man members (from left) Zach Carothers, John Gourley, Eric Howk, Zoe Manville, Jason Sechrist and Kyle O'Quin in New York. **Below and following page:** Gourley and Carothers.





are new, but the band's defiantly humble embrace of it is baked in.

...

The merch table offers a T-shirt whose large letters scream **I LIKED PORTUGAL. THE MAN BEFORE THEY SOLD OUT.** Gourley tells me it was inspired by his love of 1990s hip-hop and Wu-Tang Clan, one of the two groups that got him interested in new music during that decade. (The other was Oasis.) He talks a lot about his love of hip-hop—how the genre is forward-thinking, while rock is stuck in the past. Incidentally, the shirt was released a few months before “Feel It Still” definitively put the group in a position to be called sellouts.

“It made me think about that era in the music industry where hip-hop was just coming up,” Gourley explains. “*We’re the greatest. We’re the biggest.* That’s why the first poster we put out for ‘Feel It Still’ said ‘featuring the smash hit “Feel It Still.”’ You don’t know if it’s going to happen, but there’s a bit of *willing* it to happen.”

As kids living in the boonies, they got much of their musical education from mainstream radio, TV commercials and film trailers. Being into the most obscure underground music was a luxury they didn’t have.

“I’d like to be able to turn on any radio station and see any commercial and good music coming from anywhere,” Carothers says. “Help make the mainstream better.”

The fact that, in 2017, PTM scored a number-one hit single as a band that started out playing basement shows more than a decade earlier makes very little sense; no wonder *Billboard* reported that “Feel It Still” was the “biggest rock crossover hit in five years.” The last breakthrough rock song of its caliber was Gotye’s “Somebody That I Used to Know” in 2012. But Gotye didn’t enter the mainstream as a seasoned touring concern like Portugal. The Man, whose members were already earning a living off the fans they’d developed over many years. That night, when I notice the range of ages in the crowd, the success of “Feel It Still” seems more like a bonus than an arrival. Without it, the group would still be on the road, grinding it out.

Next-level catchiness aside, the band doesn’t seem to have much insight into why “Feel It Still” has blown up. In fact, the song was conceived with unusual ease and swiftness. The melody, borrowed from the Marvelettes’ “Please, Mr. Postman,” gets stuck in your head instantly,

making it ripe for multiple Spotify plays and commercials; it’s the kind of earworm you don’t bother fighting. Miley Cyrus mouthed the lyrics on *The Tonight Show* as part of a lip-synch battle with Jimmy Fallon, saying of it, “Sometimes a new song comes out and you just can’t get it out of your head.”

Unlike a lot of bands that have arisen from the indie-rock world, PTM has never fought mainstream success. In fact, considering the scale of producers it has worked with in the past seven years (John Hill, Mike D, Danger Mouse, Stint), a breakout hit was likely always part of the plan. The members never admit to that agenda outright, but they openly embrace mainstream channels. Gourley tells me how confounding it is to hear from musician friends who get signed and then intentionally make anti-commercial music.

“Are you fucking kidding me? That’s such an elitist idea,” Gourley says. “Indie bands want to be super indie, super weird. I think they lost track of being competitive. I think that’s really what’s missing in rock and roll. It’s not that hip-hop is taking over; it’s like y’all stop being competitive.”

Back when the band was starting out, indie rock was in a strange place. Vampire Weekend, TV on the Radio, Grizzly Bear, Animal Collective and Of Montreal were among the scene’s

“THAT’S WHAT’S MISSING IN ROCK AND ROLL. IT’S LIKE Y’ALL STOP BEING COMPETITIVE.”



MUSIC

big names; none of them bore a passing resemblance to Portugal. The Man. From the beginning, PTM has earned tepid reviews from make-or-break outlets like Pitchfork, a fact that irks Gourley if you get him talking about it.

Since joining Atlantic in 2010, the group have had access to resources they only dreamed of as they crisscrossed the country in a beat-up van. Even after 2013's *Evil Friends* didn't become a chart-smashing success, they were still able to work for three years with Beastie Boys' Mike D and Danger Mouse on the follow-up, which was to be called *Gloomin + Doomin*. Sessions would start and stop; the band would redo tracks. Gourley says the resulting music is very "experimental"—a common music euphemism suggesting that its creators are lost.

The musicians were used to putting out a record a year, and they still think in accordance with the scrappy DIY aesthetic they started

with. Uncomfortable working in nice studios, they regrouped. They went back to their old agent, a dear friend. They brought on Howk, a childhood friend from Alaska, as second guitarist. Original drummer Jason Sechrist, who'd been in and out of the band since the early days, came back not long before the new album dropped. *Gloomin + Doomin* got scrapped in favor of a fresh start, a new album title—*Woodstock*—and mostly new songs.

"It was about us wanting to take things back to where we come from, the family that we started with," Gourley tells me later.

The decision to reconceive the project resulted in large part from an offhand comment made by Gourley's dad, who wondered aloud why they were taking so long to make the new album. Don't you just go into the studio with your instruments and record?

"We had stressed about it for a long time,"

Carothers says. "That was the straw that broke the camel's back."

...

Lyrically, Portugal. The Man has always had a knack for combining the personal with the political, in its own stream-of-consciousness style. During the three years spent working on *Gloomin + Doomin*, the band members felt they were losing touch with the outside world, particularly as they watched Donald Trump Godzilla-stomp his way to the White House. At a certain point, releasing years-old music just wasn't going to cut it.

"If you're not putting out your song—that thing that was in the air that sparked that idea—for three months, it's totally irrelevant," Gourley says. "We recorded up to two weeks before *Woodstock* came out, which is not common with rock bands. I really think that's why hip-hop does so well."

The new album's title was inspired by an original ticket from the 1969 concert that Gourley's father found. It's also a reminder of the importance of connecting to the times music is created in. Opening track "Number One" samples Richie Havens from the historic three-day love-fest. The chorus of "Feel It Still" references both 1966 and 1986—glancing allusions to the civil-rights movement and the release of Beastie Boys' debut record. The video features a shot of a Sikh man burning a newspaper with the headline INFO WARS—a move that earned the band death threats—and ends with Gourley watching TV over the sounds of a crowd yelling, "Fight back."

As big as the song has become, it's a weird little exercise that doesn't match much else happening in pop music at the moment, which brings us back to the band's perpetual sense of being outsiders. That's fine with the group; it gives them perspective on how to deal with fame. Mostly, they stick together like family and find ways to remind one another of the goofballs they were five and 10 years ago, and try not to let all the attention go to their heads. The longer I spend with them, the more I see them finding ways to insert these reminders into their daily lives as members of a now-famous rock band. In that light, the hot-dog roller appears key to the next level of their success.

"I feel like it's the best thing we've ever done. The whole place smells like a 7-Eleven," Gourley says later, gazing at the rotating meat. "It just reminds me of touring in a van. It's kind of rad to take you back to that. Remember when we toured in the van and would stop at gas stations every hundred miles? There's something about that. You never lose that." ■

The men of PTM pose in midtown Manhattan the week of a *Colbert* taping.





~ P L A Y M A T E O F T H E Y E A R ~



*The votes are in! To celebrate her victory, PMOY 2018 **Nina Daniele** breathes new life into that ageless Playboy sprite, the Femlin*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JENNIFER STENGLEIN**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LEROY NEIMAN





Ever since her April 2017 Playmate pictorial, Nina Daniele has been a constant source of light and life throughout the Playboy galaxy, popping up everywhere from our Hidden Arcade parties to the streets of Hollywood, where she was seen last December wheatpasting Playboy posters in her Bunny outfit. Nina's traffic-stopping charm, infectious laugh and unmistakable grit—the latter honed over a lifetime in the Bronx—make her an exceptionally qualified Playmate of the Year. ¶ While organizing her PMOY interview, we realized two things: First, few other Playmates spent their earliest years in the Bronx. Second, and much more important, Nina is the first PMOY since the passing of Hugh Hefner, and we needed to connect her with a Playmate who knew him well and could channel a bit of his singular wisdom and warmth. It didn't take long to think of Joyce Nizzari, a fellow Bronx native whose December 1958 Playmate pictorial kicked off a half-century personal and professional relationship with Hef. So we got Joyce and Nina together to swap Playmate stories and compare their definitions of true sexiness. As you'll see, it's a match made in heaven.

JOYCE: For starters, I wondered about the Bronx. I was young when I left, so the only thing I remember is the zoo. That was a big part of my young life.

NINA: I live about a mile from the zoo. You can still go there and see the giraffes, and the projects on the horizon. It's still the same old Bronx.

JOYCE: We could walk to the zoo from the house I lived in. I think we were in the same neighborhood! So tell me about the road that led to you becoming a Playmate.

NINA: I've been modeling for about eight years now. When I started, the popular look for models was more Eastern European, androgynous, tall and gaunt. Time had to pass for it to come around to where a girl like me, whose ethnicity you don't necessarily know, could be successful. Size, height and weight began to matter less; it became more about who you are as a person, what you bring to the table, how well you manage social media. So I decided: Instead of trying to be what the industry wants me to be, I'm going to be who I've always been. And right when I decided I wouldn't back down from trying—no matter how many times people told me “You can't do fashion” and “You're not going to make it”—PLAYBOY came into my life.

JOYCE: Hef would have loved to hear that. Something he said to everyone was “Follow your dream.”

NINA: Well, that makes me really happy. PLAYBOY is a place where I feel accepted for who I am, not just what I look like. My first interview was about so much more than the photos; it was all about “Who's Nina?” And when I got to see my story in print, I was like, “Damn, that's me!” That meant so much to me—to not only be seen in my most vulnerable state, but to also be presented, in words, for who I am. That's important to PLAYBOY: how my brain



works, how my heart works. Through PLAYBOY I was able to talk about how it feels to be a woman in today's society. You've been with Playboy for more than 50 years, Joyce, and I've been for only a year, but I feel I actually became part of a family. Hef wanted to create a space for everyone, and for everyone who was invited to stay. Whatever they brought to the table was worthy, was good enough. It feels like home for me.

JOYCE: What is your personal definition of sexiness?

NINA: True sexiness is what you exude, not how

you look, and that comes from life and experience. We all have our own stories to tell, and not being afraid to show that part of ourselves—I think that's very attractive. It's a mystery that you have, a mystery about *you*, because no one can ever know what you know. Only you can know that, and you're always learning. I think knowledge in general is very attractive, whether it's a talent you have, the way you speak, the way you hold yourself—all these things are sexy.

JOYCE: It's connected, as you said, to how confident you are. Sexiness is how you feel, and of course how people feel about you. Everybody says it, but even Helen Mirren at her age is sexy. Has your definition changed at all over the past year? What does it mean to be a Playmate today?

NINA: We talked about that in my first interview in the magazine, and it reaffirmed my position in this movement that we're going through as women: We can't all speak for ourselves individually. When we speak, we have to speak for all women, and I think PLAYBOY gives us the foundation to do that.

JOYCE: So what now? Do you want to be an actress, a brain surgeon? Where's it going?

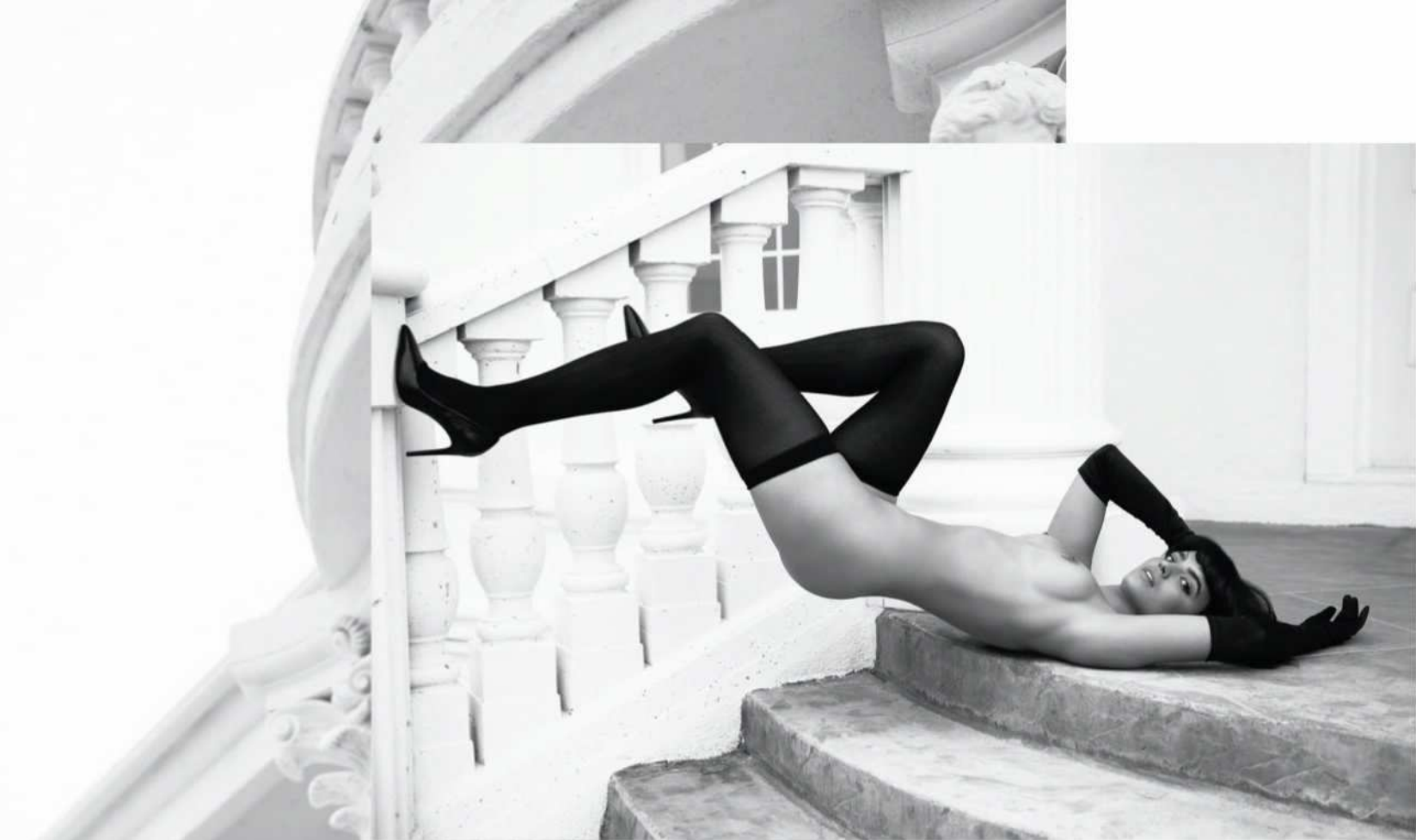
NINA: I used to be the type of person who would start a million projects. I played the violin for seven years, I took karate for four or five, I played for my college tennis team, I did swimming, I did every type of dance, I played multiple instruments—then I decided I wanted to be a stockbroker, then a vet, then a crime-scene investigator, then an EMT. Modeling is, to this day, the only thing I've stuck with. It's a waiting game, and no one tells you that. The longer you're in the industry, the better your chances of success, whether that's in front of the camera or behind it. When I was finishing college, I wanted to be a writing teacher. Back then I didn't realize that when you used a credit card you had

to pay it back, so all my credit cards were maxed out, and I had a job that barely made me enough money. I was still living at home, and the idea that I could make more than \$60 a day really blew my mind. I would still love to teach young people, but not from within a school environment.

JOYCE: You can still teach some things. Down the road, you might be doing tours as a motivational speaker.

NINA: It's possible. Anything is possible when you follow your dreams.

JOYCE: Don't forget that. ■





















THE
STATE OF



Jazz

*A journey into the heart of the all-American art form, with the help of jazz-pop legend **Don Was**, grassroots impresario **Meghan Stabile** and some of today's finest practitioners*

Don Was is nervous. We're in his room at the Bowery Hotel, sitting next to three-time Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Lucinda Williams. It's the first time she's hearing *Vanished Gardens*, her new album with the legendary jazz saxophonist Charles Lloyd and his group the Marvels. Was produced the album and is putting it out on Blue Note Records, where he has served as president since 2012.

BY **LAUREN
DU GRAF**

Meeting with Williams was not part of today's plan. We were in the middle of an interview when Was spotted her in the lobby of the hotel.

"This is so kismet, it's ridiculous," she said, reaching up to embrace him. Williams, a Southern-bred artist who has spent more than three decades exploring the Americana landscape, had been at the Bowery for weeks, putting together a deal for her forthcoming memoir. Was had been trying to contact her for her blessing on a final mix.

"Got any time now?" he asked.

We headed up to Was's suite, and Williams settled into a mohair-upholstered lounge chair. He handed her headphones and watched as she listened to the first track. Her face was inscrutable.

"This is intense," says the 65-year-old producer, who's in New York to work on a new project for the Rolling Stones. (He doesn't want to reveal too much but offers this: "It's really early. What I can tell you is that they're certainly inspired, they're definitely not done making music, and they're writing songs together. And they're good.") He's wearing a fedora, his face framed by a mess of natty dark hair. A black Armani overcoat hangs over an outfit that's all athleisure—a Columbia Sportswear zip-up and Nike Tech fleece sweatpants. A tangle of necklaces circle his neck, including one stamped with the words FUCK YEAH.

Was produced Williams's 2011 record, *Blessed*, but the stakes are different this time. It's Williams's first album for Blue Note, and she has never done a collaboration like this before. Due out June 8, the album was Was's idea. Tour dates are booked, including a headlining slot at the Playboy Jazz Festival.

Before Was took the helm, the storied jazz label was on life support. "They were going to close Blue Note down and sell the catalog from a website with some Blue Note T-shirts, and there would be no new music," Was later tells me. He proposed to his future bosses that the label broaden its aesthetic. One of them asked Was how far his vision for the label extended.

"I said, 'I don't see any reason why we couldn't

have Ryan Adams or Lucinda Williams on the label.'" Was pauses. "And here we are." (Blue Note has released Adams's last four albums.)

For the moment, the label has been rescued. Was has delivered just what he promised: an infusion of energy from outside the jazz establishment, bringing in well-known names with both edge and commercial appeal. He has also been in Miami, recording a collaborative album for the label with Iggy Pop and Dr. Lonnie Smith. "It was Iggy's idea," Was says.

Projects like these raise a question that is all but ubiquitous in this world: When it comes to crossover, where is the line between art and mere marketability? Peruse recent year-end lists of best-selling jazz albums, and you'll see that straight-ahead jazz no longer rules the charts; it's artists like Norah Jones, Michael Bubl  and the team-up of Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett.

Sitting in this hotel room, in this company, with this recording playing, the beauty of

what I'm hearing makes that line seem, for the moment, irrelevant.

...

In 2012, Don Was (born Donald Fagenson), became the third president in the history of Blue Note Records. Founded in 1939 by German  migr s Alfred Lion and Francis Wolff, the label helped launch the careers of Art Blakey, Herbie Hancock and Lee Morgan. Was is the first musician to head Blue Note—not as a "failed saxophonist," as his predecessor Bruce Lundvall described himself, but as a player who spent close to a decade doing straight-ahead jazz gigs in Detroit, went on to share stages with Bob Dylan and Elton John and is still called upon by the Stones. (The sartorial contrast is similarly marked: Lundvall was rarely seen without a suit and was known for his aesthetic attention to detail that included a pinkie ring.) In the early 1980s Was co-founded the band Was (Not Was), a group with a big hit—1987's "Walk the Dinosaur,"



Don Was (seen here at a 2016 Nashville gig) is a musician first and a businessman second.



James Francies, 22, is a new addition to the Blue Note roster.

with its indelible refrain “Boom! Boom! Shakalakalaka boom!”—and a revolving door of guests including MC5’s Wayne Kramer and trumpeter Marcus Belgrave. He went on to produce Dylan, the B-52s, Carly Simon and Bonnie Raitt. He has been producing the Rolling Stones since 1994’s *Voodoo Lounge*.

Before becoming Blue Note president, Was didn’t trust record companies. “I wasn’t looking for a job,” he says. “In fact, I was really hoping to never have a job.” Yet he was attracted to the label, which had meant a lot to him as a young man. Was connected deeply with the sound of Charles Lloyd, a musical shape-shifter who has played with the Beach Boys and the Doors. Lloyd’s rock-infused 1966 live album, *Forest Flower*, was one of the first jazz albums to sell more than a million copies, turning a generation of rock fans toward the genre. In his personal collection, Was has more records by Lloyd than any other musician.

While Lloyd is often referred to as one of the first jazz crossover artists, the saxophonist sees his music as part of a continuous expression that has emerged from the blues: “Dylan, the Doors, the Beach Boys, the rock groups of the 1960s come out of the great tradition of the blues,” Lloyd tells me over e-mail. “My earliest gigs in Memphis were with the great blues masters—Howlin’ Wolf, B.B. King, Johnny Ace, Bobby Blue Bland, Big Mama Thornton, Rosco Gordon. I came through them on my way to Bird, Lady Day and Prez (a.k.a. Lester Young). The thread of that experience is in my musical DNA.” Lloyd was one of the first musicians Was invited to the label.

Was uses the word *frivolity* repeatedly to describe his decision-making process, but he does so with the knowing

glimmer of an artist attuned to the wisdom of chance and the absurd. His newest endeavors for Blue Note reflect this sense of whimsy. Take the subscription-based *Blue Note Review*, a limited-edition boxed set designed to bring tactile romance back into music consumption. The first edition, *Peace, Love & Fishing*, includes a vinyl double album by current artists, a reissue of an out-of-print album by Blue

Mitchell, a “lifestyle zine” with a foreword by Ram Dass, lithographs by Francis Wolff, a scarf designed by John Varvatos and a turntable mat dreamed up by Ryan Adams. Was blurted out the title in a meeting. “Fishing is what improvisational musicians do every day. Sometimes it’s a marlin, sometimes it’s a boot,” he says. “Peace and love—well, that’s obvious.”

The next *Review*, tentatively titled *Spirit & Time*, is drummer-centric. Was commissioned drummers currently on the label, including Tony Allen, Chris Dave, Brian Blade and Kendrick Scott, to reimagine the overlooked records of drumming legend Tony Williams.

In an era when every label in every genre has had major struggles with declining album sales, Was sees the freedom to reinvent. The next album from Wayne Shorter, the senior member of the Blue Note roster, will be released in tandem with a graphic novel; the CDs will be packaged inside the book. “It’s pretty abstract,” Was says. “It’s not just a graphic novel; it’s Wayne Shorter’s graphic novel.”

Over e-mail, Shorter explains that Was is one

of the few “chance-takers in the business.... His dedication to the real meaning of ‘business’ is the business of life as the ultimate art, which transcends the quest for attaining awards and fame. On the contrary, Don Was has the strength of character to be faithful to the process of questing the means to an end, rather than the other way around.”

Was tells me that the company is profitable and it has “incredible support from Capitol.” (Capitol Music Group, which encompasses Blue Note and several other labels, is in turn part of Universal Music Group.) The Blue Note at Sea cruise brings in enough money to pay for a year of jazz albums. The label has also partnered with Vans sneakers and Sonos speakers. Ventures like this allow Was to tell artists they can go in the studio and do whatever they want.

I ask him how projects like Shorter’s pencil out for Blue Note. “It’s just worth doing,” he replies. “I don’t necessarily believe that you do a profit-and-loss projection for each record. I think you look at the overall picture of how the company is doing and make allowances for someone to do something extraordinary.”

Beyond the walls of Blue Note, other major players have taken different tacks. Roy Hargrove, a trumpeter with a pair of Grammys and a level of respect usually reserved for artists far beyond his 48 years, spearheaded the genre’s reach outward toward hip-hop and neo-soul, particularly through his RH Factor albums and his work with artists such as D’Angelo, Erykah Badu and Common. But these days Hargrove tours with an acoustic quintet. He’s playing some of the most straight-ahead jazz of his career.

“I’m coming more into the traditional style now that they’re forgetting about the roots,” he says. “The most challenging way to play, to me, is acoustically; the most challenging way to catch people’s ear is with the bare necessities.”

“Do you discriminate on the basis of different notes? No, you go by something that either touches you deeply or it doesn’t.”



Hargrove is a fixture at jam sessions where he encourages young musicians to get back to the real work: a militant regimen of practice until the tightrope walk of improvisation sounds effortless. “Don’t dog out the tradition,” he says. “This is the fabric of the music that you play. I don’t want the young generation to forget it, so I’m putting more food into it.”

The newcomers at the sessions, he says, “need to learn to take themselves out of the equation. It’s not about you; it’s about drawing people in with your brilliance. You have to become brilliant in order to do that. The truth is, when you play jazz, it’s a spiritual connection to people, but you have to do it right.”

It’s a sentiment Was would most likely agree with, even as his projects stray beyond the conventional boundaries of jazz. To hear him tell it, there’s a moral imperative behind such explorations: “Do you discriminate on the basis of different notes? No, you go by something that either touches you deeply or it doesn’t.”

...

In the weeks before taking the gig at Blue Note, Was spent several hours a night trying to locate the scene’s pulse. His searches kept drawing him to the Revivalist, the jazz-oriented hub housed on the music site Okayplayer. This led Was to the Revive Music Group, a genre-bending agency that specializes in promoting jazz artists steeped in the language of hip-hop, and its founder, a tenacious New York transplant named Meghan Stabile.

“I told her, ‘You seem to be at the center of all the music that’s exciting to me.’ And so we got together. I just loved her energy and her vision for something new within the music.” That meeting led to a partnership between Blue Note and Revive Music. They released three albums together between 2014 and 2016.

Stabile, now 35, is still at the epicenter of this scene. If you want to catch a glimpse of the energy that won Was over, it’s on display every Tuesday in New York’s Greenwich Village, where she runs a Revive session called Blue After Dark.

Down the steps at the Zinc Bar is a dark crimson room with a long, narrow bar. On Tuesdays after 11, the bar is usually lined with off-duty jazz musicians. The doorman, himself a musician, lets these guys (and yes, they’re mostly men) in for free.

On a recent night, you could catch the 33-year-old drummer Justin Brown perched next to the bass player Ben Williams, also 33, nursing a bourbon. In and out is 22-year-old James Francies, a pianist who plays with the Roots, just days away from stepping into the studio to record his first album for Blue Note. Beyond the bar at the

turntables is the multi-instrumentalist Casey Benjamin spinning the sort of soul, funk and R&B that tickles ears raised on sample-heavy hip-hop. Onstage, the drummer-indie rapper Kassa Overall leads a short, eclectic set before opening up the session to the audience.

The hang seems improvised, but the vibe—from the low-key lounge setting to the DJ to the high-caliber jazz by young musicians fluent in hip-hop—was orchestrated by Stabile.

“A lot of the guys who come through are off tour for a minute,” she tells me over coffee in Harlem, her brown hair tucked under an army-green baseball cap. “They don’t want to do the same shit they’ve been playing for three months. Some don’t want to play; others just want to sit in, let loose and have fun.” Half

Black Radio. Within a year she was booking shows for Glasper and members of his band in New York. Guests like Yasiin Bey (a.k.a. Mos Def) would show up unannounced.

For her first international show, she took the Robert Glasper Experiment and Bey to South Africa in 2009. It was Bey’s first trip to that country; he ended up moving there in 2013 and staying for three years.

Back then, few people took Stabile seriously. She remembers hounding Jayson Jackson, Mos Def’s manager at the time. “He wouldn’t answer my e-mails,” she says. “He wouldn’t answer my calls. I had to stalk this dude. To him I was this little girl trying to book Mos Def. These guys deal with legit, *legit* people, and I was in my early 20s.”



Meghan Stabile (taping a radio interview in 2013) never stops hustling.

Mexican, half Italian, Stabile stands around five feet tall, with expressive eyes framed by thin, 1920s film-star eyebrows—but with hoop earrings and a modern swagger.

When bassist Christian McBride first checked out a Revive session a few years back, he couldn’t believe what he saw. “It was absolutely amazing,” he says. “All these jazz musicians were in there, almost all of them millennials. Meghan had brilliantly captured this generation that grew up loving hip-hop but that could really play jazz.”

Stabile remembers that it all happened quickly. She’d just arrived in New York and was handing out flyers in the back of the original Zinc Bar, where she met Robert Glasper, still years away from releasing his Grammy-winning

She ended up getting the deal done through another connection—but not without leaving an impression on the man who had ignored her.

“I’m onstage in front of 10,000 people,” Stabile says. “It was the first time we met. I tap him on the shoulder and I’m like, ‘Hey, I’m Meghan. This is what I called you for,’ and I pointed to the crowd.”

Jackson would become her business partner.

Stabile still has to struggle for recognition, but it’s different now. Her consultancy has grown to include veteran jazz musicians and cultural institutions like Carnegie Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center, all of which look to her for advice on how to stay relevant and draw in more diverse audiences.

Her momentum is unmistakable. On an



average day, she shuttles between handling conference calls with artists, planning concerts and tours, working on a business plan and plodding through a never-ending treadmill of proposals. She's a champion of the backing musician whose talent is often overshadowed by the marquee names. "They'll talk about Bilal or Jill Scott, but will they talk about the artists behind them? They are the ones making artists sound the way they sound," she says.

She uses words like *urgently* and *immediately* to talk about musicians she believes deserve a broader audience, as in "People need to know who the fuck they are immediately."

...

Stabile, who grew up in Dover, New Hampshire, enrolled at the Berklee College of Music as a vocal-performance major. By the time she left, she had switched to a music-business major. She never met her father, and she survived an abusive relationship with her mother—experiences that, looking back, fueled her ambition, maybe to a fault. Her aunt gave her a guitar for her 14th birthday, and music became her refuge. "I guess you could say I was playing the blues," she says.

Working behind the bar at Wally's Cafe, a small, beloved jazz bar in Boston, she fell in

love with the form and absorbed the struggles of its practitioners, especially trumpeter Igmar Thomas.

"I found myself explaining a lot of things, foundational questions," says Thomas. "She would ask, 'Why is it such a struggle? Why aren't more people attracted to jazz instead of the watered-down thing?' I had to explain to her that a jazz musician in this day and age has made a decision. This is not financial-investment school."

Stabile felt a sense of anger that was "probably not healthy," she says. She resented that she hadn't been exposed to jazz growing up in Dover and was infuriated that jazz musicians, full of talent and discipline, were often paid little and treated like shit. She knew how to throw parties and had a knack for talking her way into booking venues. One day, as they were walking past a club in Cambridge, Thomas challenged Stabile to get him a gig there. She walked right in and walked out with a date and a budget of \$700.

Things got rougher after she moved to New York. Craig "Butter" Glanville, a Harlem-based producer and drummer whose great-uncle is Dizzy Gillespie, mentored Stabile once she

arrived. "She was very green. How green is green? Fluorescent green," he says. "This game isn't for everyone. It's tough, and then you're going to put it probably times five or 10 being a female. I know dudes be dumb as motherfuckers, super dicks. You got to be a woman and then deal with this?"

Stabile rarely goes out these days, not unless there's a real reason to. She tries to be up at six A.M. for prayers and meditation. It's all preparation for the next phase of her journey. "What just happened, that was the warm-up," she says.

She still advises a number of emerging young musicians. And she keeps the Tuesday night sessions going—not for the money but for the music.

...

Back in Was's suite at the Bowery, Williams is concerned about the vocals. She wants more compression. She's after that Tammy Wynette sound. "It would be one thing if I were Billie Holiday," she says.

Was suggests listening to the rest of the album without headphones, so she takes them off. The mood in the room shifts as the music comes over the speakers, Lloyd's breathy tenor saxophone in a dance with Williams's charred, sinewy voice.

They went through a lot to keep the sound natural on the album, Was explains. There's no overdubbing, no fixes. Most tracks were recorded in one or two takes.

After a gravelly vocal passage, Williams gives a thumbs-up and grins, rocking back and forth with approval. "I'm so in love with Charles and his band," she says. "It's right where I wanted it to sit. It feels real."

By the end, her eyes are misty. "I don't want to go to Austin. I want to stay and play with the Don," she says. But she has a flight to catch. She hugs us, and she's off.

We marvel at what just happened.

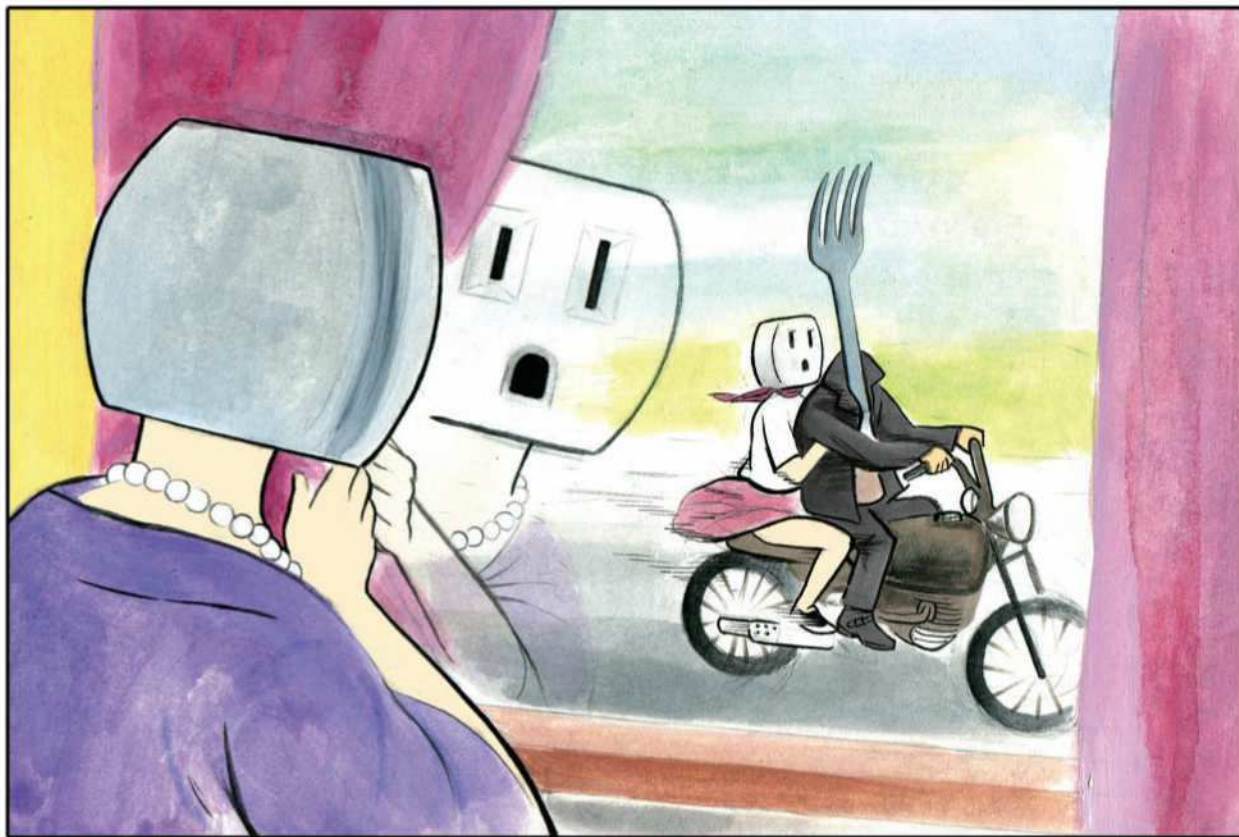
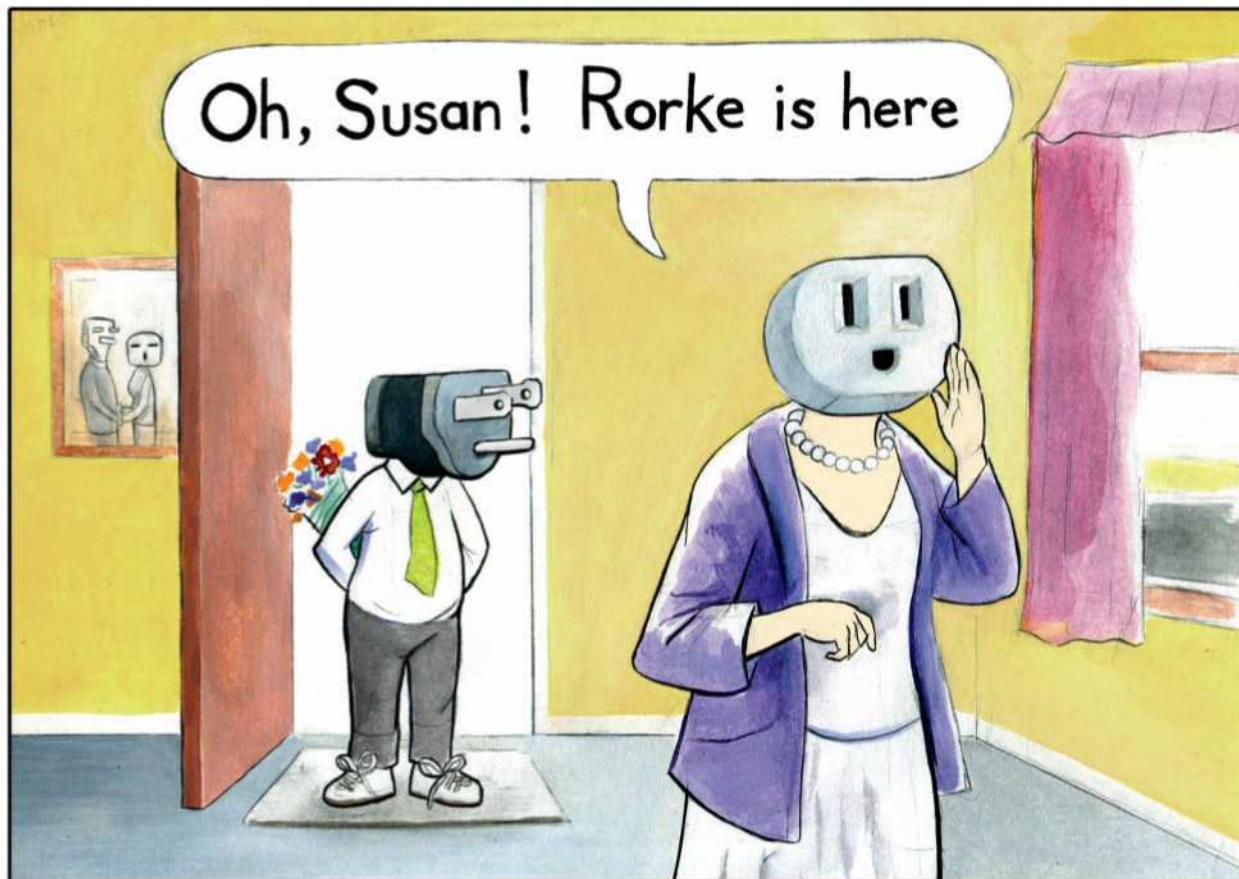
"There's a scenario in which that led to the whole record never coming out," he says, "and it's not a far-fetched scenario. If she hated it, it would be over. But you just have to be fearless about it. Also, it's really fucking good. If I thought she wasn't awesome on it and it didn't stand up with her best work, we would have scrapped it. I would never dream of a situation that would have compromised her."

He trails off, pauses and looks out the window. "So many things could have gotten thrown off. I don't think it's out of line to say there was a potential half a million dollars in damages," he says.

He pauses to register the pressure and releases it with laughter. The future, it seems, must be improvised. ■



Trumpeter and bandleader Igmar Thomas: "This is not financial-investment school."





20Q

JIM JEFFERIES

The hard-driving Aussie comedian takes on love and bananas, what the new Star Wars movies got wrong and the changing face of late night

Q1: *The Jim Jefferies Show* debuted last year. What are the best and worst parts about having your own talk show?

JEFFERIES: You get to meet the people you want to meet. We just interviewed Noel Gallagher two days ago. The only reason he's on the show is because he's one of my favorite rock stars, but the interview turned out great. I asked him about stuff like Brexit, health care, the #MeToo movement, gun control. The worst part: I get far more abuse on the internet than I used to when I was doing my sitcom, *Legit*. Back then, the worst thing people would say was "This show's not funny." People didn't hate-watch it. People do hate-watch this show, as they do with anything that's opinion- and news-based. Now they're like, "Libtard!"

Q2: *Your 2014 gun-control clip—in which you urge people to admit they're pro-gun simply because guns are cool—went viral and arguably led to you getting your own political talk show. How do you look back on that bit?*

JEFFERIES: What I like about the gun-control routine is that it gave people a lot of fun argu-

ments to have at dinner parties, rather than just getting angry, yelling at each other and rattling off statistics. I wrote the whole thing the day after Sandy Hook. It came to me very quickly, because we were on the set of *Legit*, and I was having a debate with another actor, who was pro-gun. The whole routine came out of the argument we had over lunch. It actually would have been a one-off if people didn't write me so much hate mail about it.

Q3: *The New York Times* called your brand of comedy "enlightened crudity." How does that grab you?

JEFFERIES: Did they? That was nice of them. "Enlightened crudity"—yeah, I'll take that as a compliment. I don't see it as being crude, but I guess that's what makes me crude. But enlightened? I don't know if I'm enlightened—philosophical, maybe, but not enlightened. Like, I'm not saying it's *good* philosophy. Back then there must have been, like, Plato, and then that other cunt you never heard of. I'm probably that other cunt you never heard of.

Q4: *I heard you started out doing musical theater and opera when you were at university*

and only stopped because you damaged your vocal cords. True?

JEFFERIES: Yeah, I did a couple of summer opera gigs: *Roméo et Juliette* by Charles Gounod, in French, and *The Flying Dutchman* by Wagner. I was just in the chorus, in the back—a spear holder. But then I blew my throat out and had a couple of surgeries. I sometimes lie in interviews and say I have a degree in musical theater, but I never finished.

Q5: *So was comedy your backup plan?*

JEFFERIES: No, I always wanted to be a comedian. I was just doing theater to appease my parents and because I didn't have the grades to get into university any other way. But you've gotta tap-dance and this and that, and I wasn't good at any of that. I really wanted to be a stand-up. I actually did two open-mike spots when I was 17, but then I didn't do any again till I was 23.

Q6: *Did the first two go that poorly?*

JEFFERIES: The second went appallingly bad. They said you had to bring a parent if you were under 18, so it went really bad in front of my dad. It was a really rainy day, and we had to

BY **DEVON MALONEY** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PATRICK MAUS**





drive all the way back together. He was like, “You’re good at other things....” He was trying to give an encouraging speech, but it was really disheartening. It was good that I went to university in Perth, because it’s a very isolated city, not much of a comedy scene. So I got real good, real fast—in my mind. I was already used to having stage time, so I hit the ground running. I was like, “Wow, I’m good at this.” And then I moved to Sydney, and I was like, “I’m all right at this.” And then I moved to London, and I was like, “I might get by.” So yeah, it took a while.

Q7: *I’ve also heard that you hate bananas. What’s wrong with you?*

JEFFERIES: I’ve never touched a banana except when I was a child and my brother mashed one into my face. But I have never willingly picked up a banana. I don’t like the smell of them, the texture. I’m not a picky eater, but I’ve vomited several times just looking at someone eating a banana. I actually had a banana breakthrough recently: I took my son on a two-week string of gigs with me, just me and him. He’s five and a picky eater, and one of the fucking five or six things that he eats are *fucking bananas*. I know they’re good for you, and when you’re on a plane and he’s hungry and won’t eat the meal, you gotta get something into him that’s good, you know? So I actually peeled a banana for him, and then I had to sit next to him and just shut my eyes. Now that’s love.

Q8: *Do you have any other surprisingly strong opinions on little things?*

JEFFERIES: I can get into fights about *Love Actually*. I hate that movie.

Q9: *You’ve said that social media is a place where you showcase your best days, and stand-up comedy is the opposite: It’s about sharing*

your worst day over and over. Does that mean you don’t like social media?

JEFFERIES: Yeah, I’m not a big fan. Social media makes you feel shit about whatever relationship you’re in. Everyone else is having a better time than you are. Everyone else is amazing, and you don’t get to go on enough holidays. A lot of the time I’m on social media, it’s because I’ve been told I should do it more. Instagram’s not a good medium for a guy who looks like me. I don’t mind Twitter as much, but I don’t really do one-liners, so that’s not a format that works out well for me. It’s good for the occasional argument with another celebrity.

Q10: *If you could rewrite any movie, what would you pick?*

JEFFERIES: *Superman IV*. And *Superman III*. And all three of the *Star Wars* prequels—could’ve made those a lot better. And I’ll tell you what other film: The fucking *Last Jedi* was a piece of shit.

Q11: *I almost don’t want to ask, but why don’t you think *The Last Jedi* is good?*

JEFFERIES: Here’s what *The Last Jedi* and *The Force Awakens* do wrong: In *Return of the Jedi* they beat the Empire, and now, immediately, the Empire’s back? No, no, no! There’s always a time of “good.” Like in the real world, power goes back and forth: We go Republicans, Democrats, Republicans, Democrats. What should have happened is Luke and Leia are running shit now. They’re the government but maybe slightly corrupt at this stage, because power corrupts, right? So the Empire’s all shut down, but you’ve still got some disgruntled ex-stormtroopers and some young people who are the equivalent of neo-Nazis. They’re like, ‘Oh, I want to be a stormtrooper.’ They’re obsessed with the old ways. Maybe they salute pictures of fucking Darth Vader.

Q12: *But do you realize you just described Kylo Ren, Adam Driver’s character?*

JEFFERIES: No, because you need the good guys to be the big people and the bad guys to be the little people. Then the bad guys rise up and get their victory over the good guys, and we’re off to the races again. And who knows what the fuck’s going on with Snoke? Who is he? What was the point of him? He was a huge hologram, and they missed a big opportunity by not making him two feet tall in real life, like an evil Yoda.

Q13: *You’ve made a lot of raunchy and offensive jokes over the years, many of which come from personal experience: One character on *Legit* had muscular dystrophy like a friend of yours, and you had a bit about getting diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome. Has your approach to topics like that changed over the years as your career has grown, especially in today’s atmosphere?*

JEFFERIES: No. I write things as they happen to me. If I had a dodgy situation or a one-night stand now, of course I would still talk about it. I don’t see any problem with it, as long as it’s a true story. What constantly surprises me, though, is people taking stories I’ve done and writing in articles that I did all these things verbatim. Some of the stories I tell are 50 or even 10 percent true. You start with a story, you tell it onstage, and then you add a line and you take out a thing and you add another line, and then all of a sudden the story’s bigger. It’s still entertainment. Now, with the whole “being on the spectrum” thing—when I was a kid they said I had ADD. Is it just that people aren’t allowed to be weird? Are we diagnosing personalities? I know that some people really are extremely autistic, but can’t I just be awkward? I don’t view myself any differently now.

Other people have used it as an excuse for my behavior. [*laughs*] I think they did an episode of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* about that recently, where Larry David is acting like an asshole and then saying, “I’m on the spectrum.”

Q14: *You also make a lot of tongue-in-cheek jokes about being a foreigner and taking American jobs. Are there any rising non-white-guy comedians you’d like to plug to make up for that?*

JEFFERIES: One of our best writers on the show, a guy named Curtis Cook, does very good stand-up. I would suggest him. I think Michelle Wolf’s amazing; she just got a show similar to mine on

**I WRITE THINGS AS THEY
HAPPEN TO ME. I DON’T SEE
ANY PROBLEM WITH IT, AS
LONG AS IT’S A TRUE STORY.**



Netflix. Sarah Tiana is hysterical. Kelsey Cook is very good.

Q15: *The Jim Jefferies Show* is one of the only late-night talk shows currently on that didn't exist before the Trump administration. How does that affect how you put the show together?

JEFFERIES: I didn't think he'd win. People tell me, "This show is Trump bashing." But if he hadn't been voted in, we would have done a fair amount of Hillary bashing, or whoever-was-in-power bashing. It's establishment bashing. When he's doing something good, I try to

comment on it—not to appease people but to appease myself. I was saying in the writers' room today: Is he responsible for the stock market doing well? Because if he is, I don't want to tease him about that. Even if it's just a throw-away comment: "Although he has fixed the stock market and unemployment is down...." You gotta give credit where credit's due.

Q16: *Has anything happened between seasons that you wish you could have done a segment on?*

JEFFERIES: I would have enjoyed doing a bit when the "shithole countries" comment went

down. John Oliver talked about the Australian deputy prime minister who got his mistress knocked up—I would have done a good bit on that.

Q17: *Home-court advantage. How has late-night comedy changed in the past few years?*

JEFFERIES: People doing it have become more politicized. Late-night hosts never used to give their opinions outside of joke form. You never saw Jay Leno cry after a massacre, like Kimmel did. And people used to almost be on teams, like "I'm a Letterman guy" or "I'm a Leno guy." Now you might watch one *Kimmel* a week, then one *Fallon*. I will say this about John Oliver's show—and I'm not taking anything away from it—its lead-in is *Game of Thrones*, the most popular show on earth. So let's not give it too much credit, right? The people who fall asleep during *Game of Thrones* are watching John Oliver. My lead-in is *Tosh.O*, which I'm not turning my nose up at, but I can't compare my ratings to its ratings.

Q18: *Do you watch Game of Thrones?*

JEFFERIES: No. I watched one season, but I just didn't get why the characters cared so much. It's like, "Oh, now I'm the king of this town that has 12 people." You're a fucking idiot in a village, mate. And every time I liked a character, they got killed, so I was like, Fuck this. There are a lot of breasts, but if I want to see breasts, I'll read your magazine. But to de-stress, I've been watching a lot of sitcoms. I just watched the last season of *The Goldbergs*. And *The Good Place* is really good.

Q19: *I was just watching the reboot of One Day at a Time. Have you seen it?*

JEFFERIES: It's so bizarre that you mention that, because I was actually cast as [Kramer-esque building manager] Schneider before I decided to do the talk show instead. If I'd done it, the character would have been rewritten as a slightly bigoted Australian guy. I remember in the audition the line was something like "Cubans can be so loud when you're partying," and I changed it to "you people," to make it slightly more racist. I watched a few episodes, but I haven't continued to watch it because I don't want to regret not taking the job.

Q20: *What does that alternate life look like?*

JEFFERIES: That would be a very easy, nice life. There's probably more money in sitcoms, and I wouldn't get hate mail all the time. Look, I see myself retiring one day, to Maui or something, and becoming the four-to-six p.m. drive-time radio guy. It doesn't have to pay well. I just need to work two hours a day to keep busy—just every day go, "It's Jim Jefferies's Drive Time. And there's no traffic, because you're in Maui. Go for a swim!" ■



PLAYMATE

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Sweat it out with **Shauna Sexton**, our magnificent May Playmate

"I'm good at working under pressure." Shauna Sexton isn't referring to posing nude in front of the photographer's lens. The 22-year-old is a full-time veterinary technician, pulling 12-hour shifts at an emergency clinic that specializes in small-breed animals. "I started in this field when I was about 16," she says. "After my first experience in surgery, I realized fast-paced work under pressure is for me. Whatever requires me to move quickly and freely is intriguing. I love surgery more than anything."

Saving animals' lives is her primary passion; modeling comes in a hard second. "I don't classify myself as a model. It's so cliché nowadays for people to say, 'I'm a model.' Modeling is my plan B. If it takes off, I'll be stoked." Whatever she does, Shauna approaches it wholeheartedly, whether she's working out (she gets up at five A.M. every day to hit the gym), taking her Labrador-bloodhound mix, Otis, to the beach ("even when it's freezing"), or simply enjoying a meal. "I eat like an NFL linebacker," she deadpans. "You can throw tacos in front of me along with a McDonald's cheeseburger, and I will destroy it all."

For Shauna, a former Navy kid who grew up within spitting distance of Chesapeake Bay, it's all about striking a balance and being true to her curious and independent nature: "I'm a pretty realistic human being." She is also "very much single," as she puts it, and while she appreciates a man who cares about his body, maintenance of the mind is equally important. "I want someone who's able to compromise but doesn't sell himself short," she says. "I appreciate people who are the truest forms of themselves and brutally honest about who they are." Just don't ask the spontaneous Shauna where she'll be in a few years. "As long as I continue to grow as a person, I'll be where I need to be."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DOVE SHORE**









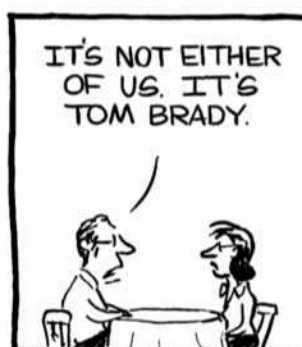








15 WAYS TO BREAK UP



WEYANT







DATA SHEET



BIRTHPLACE: Virginia Beach, Virginia **CURRENT CITY:** Los Angeles, California

HELP!

I'm a vet tech. Animals truly depend on us. If we can't help them, no one else can. There have been times in surgery when I felt that "Oh, fuck" moment. You work as hard and fast as you can to save their lives.

WHISKEY TRAIN

Whiskey, all day. I like to drink whiskey and soda, which makes some people cringe. I've been super into Bulleit lately, but then again, I'm poor and 22, so I'll be like, "Give me Jameson! Give me Jack!"

GYM BUNNY

If I'm not working, I'm working out. My dad was a CrossFit coach, so I was raised on it. A lot of exercises I do are related to Olympic lifting, but I make modifications. I do high-interval training and incorporate cardio. I'll do that in the

morning, then I'll go to In-N-Out and not feel guilty at all.

FUNNY FACE TIME

Humor is so important. I need someone who can keep up with my sarcasm, or it's just not going to work. I want to learn about you—with you in front of me, not through texting. Good food, good drinks and good conversation, and we can go from there.

SWEET EMOTION

Everyone tries to show no feelings nowadays, and I'm just not into that. When it comes to modern dating, everyone wants to be a tough guy. But we all *feel*, and it's okay to be upset about things; just express it in an appropriate way.

GRUNGE GODDESS

I have a serious case of nostalgia. I was born in the late 1990s, so it's

kind of inexcusable, but I am obsessed with grunge. I love Pearl Jam, Smashing Pumpkins, Stone Temple Pilots. I can freaking *jam* to 1990s music.

CATWALKS AND CAT DOGS

I really respect models and the people who hustle at it. It can be as stressful as the veterinary industry. Whatever's important to you, figure it out. Just show up! If you're working hard and making your money, I respect it.

LIVE YOUR LIFE

I have always lived in an impulsive mode. It may not be the best thing for me, but it has helped me figure out what I like and dislike. I've had to deal with a lot of shit in my life. I know a lot of people idolize other individuals, but you have to be able to be alone with yourself.

Shauna Sexton

@shaunasexton_





PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Remember when Heather Locklear was charged with beating up a cop? Apparently news stories in 2018 are based on Mad Libs.

Seen recently on a man's dating-site profile: "Meeting me is like the first time you



ate sushi or wore a thong. It seems weird initially, but you learn to love it."

Impressive: Rex Tillerson was secretary of state for 39.5 Scaramuccis.

You know, I'm tired of having to make multiple stops when I need tires, a diamond bracelet and 20 gallons of mayonnaise," said the man who would go on to found Costco.

Seen on another dating profile: "I make a six-figure salary. Full disclosure: Two of those figures are to the right of the decimal point."

GIRLFRIEND: I've got good news, and I've got bad news. Which one do you want to hear first?

BOYFRIEND: Uh, the good news.

GIRLFRIEND: I got you a new coffee mug.

BOYFRIEND: Thanks! And the bad news?
GIRLFRIEND: It's a WORLD'S GREATEST DAD mug.

A guy said to his girlfriend, "In the spirit of the upcoming Kentucky Derby, I should tell you I've always wanted to use a riding crop in the bedroom."

"Well," she replied, "in the spirit of the Derby I should tell *you* I've been riding another stud."

Guys have all the swag in the world until they have to read anything out loud.

Seen on yet another guy's profile, in answer to the question "How do women perceive you?":

"I confess, women in the past have rejected me, much as the human body rejects a baboon heart, post-surgery—just a visceral, immediate, total rejection at any cost to the host organism."

A dentist is attending to a longtime and panic-prone patient.

DENTIST: Now, Mr. Cline, this is going to hurt a little.

PATIENT: I can't do it, doc! Give me more novocaine!

DENTIST: What? No, not the procedure. I was going to tell you I've been sleeping with your wife.

Ill never forget my dear uncle's last words. "I am your father," he said. What a guy—still doing *Star Wars* impressions right to the end.

A young man writes home from his year abroad in Russia. "Mom and Dad, I've started dating someone. You'll love her. She's a real doll—a painted wooden nesting doll, in fact. She's number two in a group of eight, so she's one of your bigger gals, which I find I like. At first she seemed really empty inside, but once I got her to open up, she was full of personalities."

Two bros were hanging out on a Sunday in June.

"I have this ex-girlfriend who texts me

'Happy Father's Day!' every year," said the first.

"Shit, dog," said his friend.

"I know! It's crazy that she has the time to be so funny—and a single mom!"

A woman asked her husband what he was planning for their 20th anniversary.

"I'm taking you to Europe," he said.

"Oh, darling, that's wonderful," she said. "And what are you planning to do for our 40th?"

"Pick you back up."

Turning to another married couple: A husband asked his wife what she wanted for Mother's Day.



"An extended stay at Motel 6," she replied. "You deserve a nicer hotel than that," he told her.

"It's not for me."





ON THE ROAD WITH

G-EAZY

BY **REBECCA HAITHCOAT** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DANIEL PRAKOPCYK**



MUSIC

Tips on staying sane while touring the world (spoiler alert: sour candy) from one of the hardest-working rappers in the game

G-Eazy's years of hustling mixtapes on street corners have blurred into extensive tours of the world's arenas, but the 28-year-old Bay Area rapper and music-business grad hasn't forgotten where he comes from. Shell out for a meet-and-greet ticket, and you'll pregame in a decked-out Airstream trailer and be coiffed with G-Eazy's cut, courtesy of his best friend and personal barber. It puts the standard selfie-and-hug VIP package to shame—and why wouldn't you want to take after the guy? Last December's *The Beautiful & Damned*, his third major-label studio album, has already gone gold. It

includes "Him & I," a duet with his girlfriend, Halsey, that hit number one on the *Billboard* pop chart. To borrow the title of his first album: Must be nice.

With the repetition and constant traveling of being on tour, how do you stay sane?

I don't think I am. [laughs] I lost that a long time

ago. To stay grounded, the most important thing is calling home, whether that's family or friends you grew up with. It's important not to lose touch with that.

What's a tour story you'll tell your pals in the retirement home one day?

It's always funny when girls throw their panties and bras on stage; they'll write their phone numbers inside. Some of the wildest stories come from talking to fans who've been to 40 or 50 shows. That's some Grateful Dead shit. It's inspiring that anybody cares that much to come back year after year.

Anything crazy in your contract rider?

I love sour candy—not the kind you get at the gas station; you gotta find red or green sour belts at a candy store. I drink a lot of coffee to get through the day. Having brand-new socks

and boxers every day so you can just throw them away and never do laundry is pretty much the coolest thing ever.

Recently you tweeted that "life is hella good." What has made it so?

It's important to take a step back to acknowledge and appreciate all the good things going on. I'm in my 20s. I'm healthy. This is my third album on a major label, and they've all had platinum singles. And I have a really amazing girlfriend who I have the number one song on the radio with.

Speaking of your girlfriend, what's the sexiest quality a woman can have?

Confidence. Knowledge of self. Halsey's got a really strong identity. And she's got a really, really big energy and personality. It's not necessarily being the loudest person in the room or the one who talks the most, but her presence is really beautiful and powerful and sexy.

What does it feel like to achieve that sort of milestone with somebody you're in a relationship with?

It's crazy. Doing *SNL* was fucking crazy. When you do a song with somebody, you kind of attach to them for the lifetime of that song. Imagine you do a song with somebody you hate—you're going to have to travel with them to perform it, just eternally connected. So to get to share that with the person I'm sleeping with is really dope.

The tabloids are always running stories about celebrities who break up "due to their schedules." Is that a real thing or an excuse?

That's actually a real thing. We both have exhausting schedules. And you employ a lot of people, so it's not just you and your job at the end of the day. At the end of my last run I'd played, like, 250 shows, not to mention video shoots and interviews and red carpet—the traveling alone is a lot. So it's important to make the effort to carve out time for your personal life.

What is your greatest temptation or your biggest vice?

Uhhhh—sex, drugs and alcohol. And sour candy.

G-Eazy embarks on his Endless Summer tour this July.



Trespassing, larceny and crime-scene
sex—romance is alive and thriving

UNLAWFUL ENTRY

ILLUSTRATION BY DIEGO PATIÑO

BY CHUCK PALAHNIUK

Back in the world you still know...back in Before Times, here's how Walter Baines had always dreamed of doing it.

On Shasta's 25th birthday he'd suggest taking a bus, the bus going uphill, the one that most days carries her mom and the other house cleaners to work. He'd wear his lucky Lamborghini scarf even if it's so old it's turning back into dirty wool.

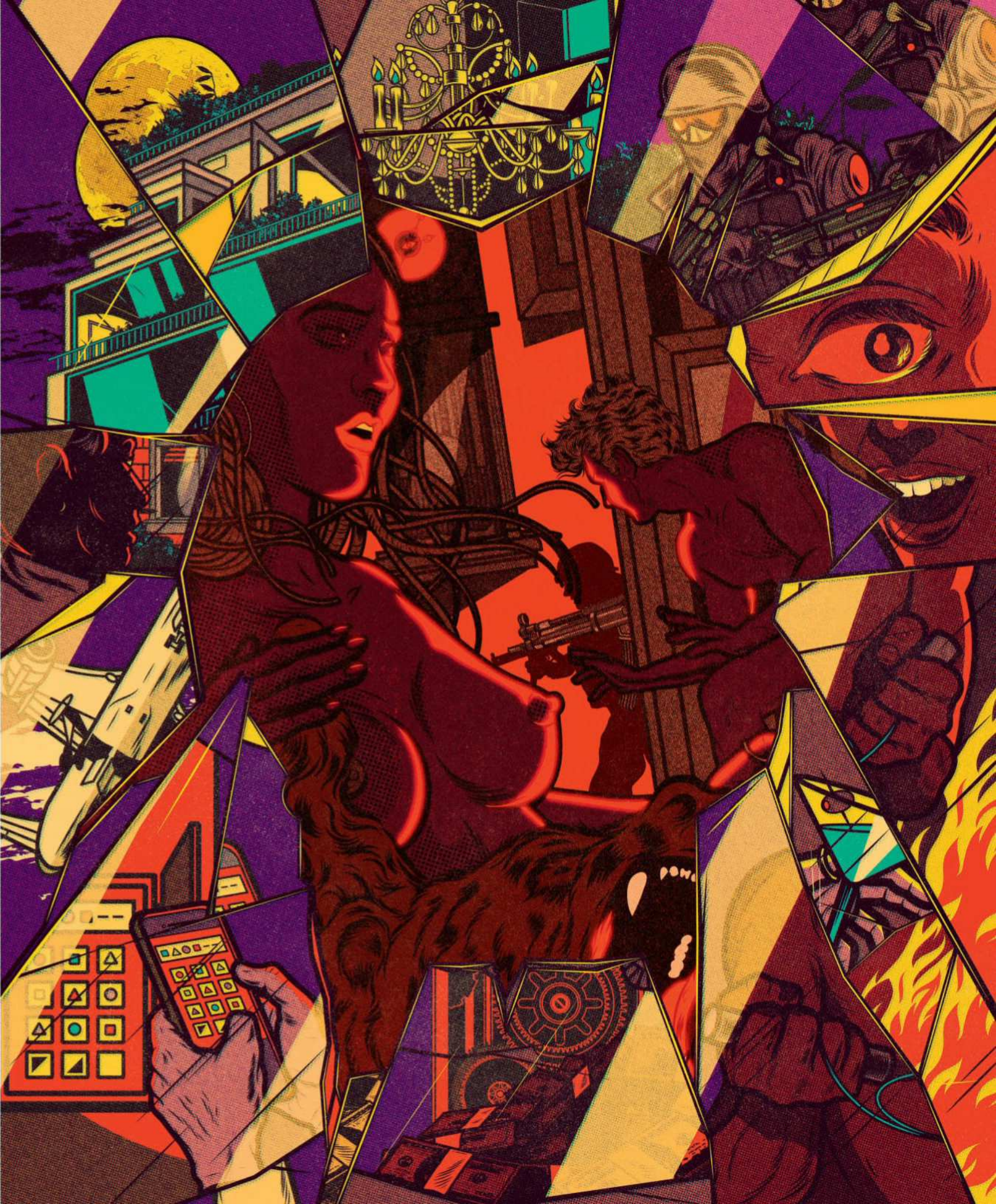
The two of them would catch the last bus of the night, following the route past that house. Not the house Mrs. Shasta cleans but the one with Scarlett O'Hara columns lining the front porch and the rooflines and lightning rods and red-brick chimneys rising above the ancestral oak trees. It's the house Shasta has always gawked at the way a dog eyeballs a squirrel, like that pile of bricks and ivy is her pornography. One stop past the house in question Walter would step off the bus and walk back to where the windows would be dark. When she pulled away, he'd get her, tight, around one wrist and tug, gently, saying, "It's a surprise," leading her past a statue that creeps him out.

It's a monkey made out of that metal where if you touched it on a cold day you'd be touching it forever, and anyone who touched you would stick, as would people who touched them until everyone in the world would be trapped together like ice-nine in Vonnegut. The little statue brings to mind a little monkey dressed as a clown, maybe to ride a horse only with his face painted white. Like in Japan.

Walter would cross the damp grass, beyond the Kabuki-faced monkey-clown statuette, past the little yellow sign for the alarm company.

To mark the occasion, Walter would pull out his lucky pipe and tamp the bowl full of Hindu Kush. Ever the gentleman, he'd offer Shasta the first hit.

He'd pat his hip pocket to double check for a bulge, a round bulge like old-school Kennedy half dollars, like pirate doubloons or chocolate gelt—in reality only gold-foil-wrapped condoms his ma distributes wholesale. His fingertips would trace the outline of something else,





coiled, a larger circle, a loop of something tucked deep in his back pocket.

Walter would lead her, shivering, onto the porch, where and when she'd hide behind a column, standing sideways-skinny in the shadows, blocked from the street. She'd be trusting him but be ready to run. Then and there, he'd say, "Let me go get your birthday present," and he'd disappear around the side of the house.

She'll cower there, hearing crickets chirp and the hiss of in-ground sprinklers. Smelling this and that. The nighttime air carries swimming pool chlorine and the vanilla fabric softener of billowing steam from some dryer vent. A private security patrol will cruise by playing its searchlight over the hedges. Since her finger-painting days, this house has stood here, filled with history, never changing, a place where she could never imagine feeling afraid. Here and now she's hugging herself behind a column, looking on her phone for a taxi, surfing the Neighborhood Watch sites to see if anyone's reported two prowlers.

The front door creaks open. As if by itself, the paneled, white-painted door will swing aside on its brass hinges. Nightmare slow. Before she can bolt down the steps, comes a whisper from the darkness inside the front hallway, Walter's voice whispering, "Happy birthday, Shasta."

Walter will edge his head out until the porch light puts a white mask on his face, wave a hand for her to come inside. He'll whisper, "It's okay."

She'll stand there between the fear she feels and what she wants most: the end of all fear.

He'll say, "Hurry."

She'll give the empty, dark street one last look and step inside. He'll shut the door. The two of them will kiss until her eyes adjust so she can look around in the half-light. Take note of the brass chandelier holding a forest of fake candles above their heads. Check out the stairway curving down, out of the darkness. The carved, leather-scented wood of everything. From somewhere, Walter will hear a clock ticking, loud against the silence. Little smears of light will bounce off a swinging, polished silver pendulum. Flicker in shades of blue off the mirror above a fireplace.

The thing about Shasta is the taste of her mouth. In his experience a girl can be beautiful with all the tits in the world, long legs and a button nose, but a bad-tasting mouth makes her only as good as porn. Shasta, the inside of her mouth reminds him of high-fructose corn syrup, like soaking maraschino cherries stewed with Red No. 5 and gelatin until her tongue has the mouth-feel of a Hostess fruit pie flaking sugar like a baby snake shedding its sweet, dead, sweet skin. Until every French kiss is him deep-throating a semi-molten, sugar-coated snake, like a little garter snake or a garden-variety brown boa. Like Walter's mouth is locked overnight in a delicious combination reptile house and Danish pastry shop.

She'll whisper about the alarm system, and he'll point upward. Her gaze will follow his arm to a camera mounted high on one wall. When and where he'll give her a silent thumbs-up, a-okay. He'll explain that he hacked the

system. Before they even boarded the bus, Walter deactivated everything, remotely. He found a window unlocked in the back. He'd been planning this for weeks. No one will ever know they were here.

As irrefutable evidence that he's more than a slack-jawed, single-digit brain-cell burner, he'll explain about network enumeration and exploitation. Walter will boast about his genius cryptographic keys while leading her toward the stairs.

Shasta will be heel dragging, whispering about homeowners with shotguns. About stand-your-ground laws.

If anyone catches them, Walter will promise to lie. He'll swear that he lured her here to strangle her. He's a serial killer. He's got victims buried in shallow graves all over the American West. He'll pretend to a jury that he'd told her this was his house. He'd planned to eat Froot Loops out of the bowl he'd make from her skull. Using her blood, he'd write **HELTER**

**SEX IS SEX,
BUT SEX PLUS
DANGER IS
GREAT.**



SKELTER on the glass door of the Sub-Zero wine cooler. As an almost-butchered woman, she'll get off scot-free.

Walter will say that he's already snooped around. No one's home. He'll reach into his back pocket and show her the coil of thin wire. It's ready for when the police frisk him: a garrote, for strangling her, with a small wooden peg attached to either end so he can pull it tight. It's her get-out-of-jail-free card. Seeing condoms and a murder weapon will be all the insurance policy she'll need. She can relax.

Sex is sex, but sex plus danger is great. The looming threat of being serial-killed or getting jail time will bring down her juice faster than green M&M's. The both of them a tangled knot, he'll go at it until they're half dead. They'll christen every room. If there's a safe, behind a painting or a secret panel in the wall, Walter will find it. He'll press his ear near the dial and listen to the tumblers spin. Before she says not to, he'll throw the handle and open the heavy door, taking only enough cash for two first-class one-way tickets to Denver.

In Denver, he'll take her on another bus ride to where big houses sit far apart. He'll show her on his phone how he reverse-engineered the security-monitoring software, how easy, and she'll follow him around the sides of a house until they find a window unlatched.

Before here and now, she's only known him as some baked chode. A hammered nobody who can only afford ditch weed shake full of seeds and stems. He lives in his ma's basement, where the plumbing growls like a stomach, like the sound of an impending bad smell. Shasta likes him okay, but not so much that she'd marry him.

By Denver, she's bought into his secret Robin Hood bad-boy side. The way he can open doors—abracadabra—and human-traffic the two of them into rich, forbidden worlds. After they make love on a bearskin rug and throw the goopy condom into a roaring fire in a stone fireplace under a crystal chandelier, after they drink stolen wine and she washes the glasses and puts everything back, then he'll locate another safe. This one, hidden under the false bottom of a seemingly empty bathroom cabinet, he'll have it open in a flash and withdraw just the money they need to fly to Chicago.

That bad-boy Walter will completely win her over. Chicago will be a repeat of Denver. Minneapolis will take them to Seattle. As a sign of her newfound awe and respect, she starts referring to his junk as the Penis de Milo. In Minneapolis she slips up and calls him "daddy." Seattle leads to San Francisco, where they'll sneak past the doorman at some

art deco skyscraper that they'll just happen to be passing one night. He'll hack the elevator code and ride to the penthouse. Using his phone, he'll show her the view from every security camera to prove nobody's home. While Shasta stands lookout near the elevator, he'll trip the locks, then hurry her inside. He'll remind her of the backup scenario. Him: serial killer. Her: victim. The two of them, outlaws. The next day they'll be strolling along a dock in Sausalito where he'll target a yacht. They'll take it out into the bay, not sailing, he's not that much of a show-off. He'll use the motor and spend a sunny day on the water. On the deck, catching some rays, she'll say, "Show me, again." Then and there he'll pull the coiled wire out of his pocket and demonstrate how easily it fits around her neck. Just to give her peace of mind.

A locker will yield an array of bikinis all in perfect Size Shasta. He's neither a tit man nor a leg man so she's his physical ideal, stretched out on a deck chair, sucking down Durban Poison until her skin burns the color of deep-dish chili-cheese Pepperoni Stix. That same evening, he'll moor the yacht and look for a new safe, this one hidden by a spice rack camouflaged behind a panel in the galley. The money he finds will get them both down to San Diego.

Still they're trespassers in paradise. She might be having a ball, touring the glamorous life with Mr. Douche Danger. But she'll never marry him, and he knows that.

As long as her vacation time holds out, they'll hop from San Diego to New Orleans to Miami. In a waterfront villa, they'll be making love. In a canopy bed beside big windows that look out on the ocean under a full moon. Not a minute after they've taken each other to heaven and back, the bedroom doors will burst open. Uniformed men train their side arms on Shasta. The lights blaze bright, and she screams, clutching damp sheets over her naked body. Not like Walter practiced, not exactly, she screams, "He's a serial killer," meaning him. She screams, "He told me he lived here." So much for her acting skills. She says, "He planned to strangle me!"

A voice among the uniforms yells, "Police!" Commands, "Put your hands where we can see them!"

This is how it ends, their cross-country crime spree. Bonnie and Clyde without the body count. With the spit still wet on each other, he'll climb out of bed and find his pants. He'll show the police his driver's license. Keeping his hands in the air, his pecker still stuck out so hard it shines, still waving the filled

condom like a little white flag, he'll cross the room to an elegant antique French desk.

She'll still be in bed, openly weeping, saying, "Thank God, thank you! He calls this love, but he plans to destroy me!"

The police won't allow Walter to actually open the desk drawer so he'll direct an officer to do so. Revealed within, lying on top in plain sight, will be a deed of property ownership. On it, notarized and duly recorded in all public records will be the same name as on the driver's license. His name. Where and when, in the elegant intonations of a landed aristocrat, he'll explain, smiling, naked, "Officers, I own this house."

In the bed, the weeping will stop. Shasta's voice will ask, "Huh?" The two of them had been drinking red wine, and the edge of her glass will have left a thin, red Salvador Dalí mustache curving up from the corners of her mouth.

He'll explain. He owned everything. In Denver, in Seattle, every house is his. He knew the codes, the combinations to the safes. The cash he took was his own. He left the windows unlocked and tipped doormen to look the other way. Even the yacht and the bikinis. Secretly, Walter dialed 9-1-1 to bring the cops at this, the perfect moment.

Blithely, he'll pull off the condom and cast it aside. Not only is he a brash bad-boy douche bag with the stealth and cunning to skate through life and show a girl a good time, he's also rich. He'll be the same old Walter she liked before, only loaded. The regular him, but with so much more to love.


With the police officers looking on, their guns lowered, him still naked, her naked, he'll kneel on the floor near his pants. He'll reach into the pocket where the garrote is hidden and bring out a ring. He'll ask, "Will you marry me?"

A big diamond ring.

There and then, a crew of caterers will arrive with chocolate-dipped strawberries and Mountain Dew-flavored Doritos with garlic popcorn and extra ranch dressing on the side. He'll fire up a big, juicy party bowl packed with New Purple Power, and even the cops will greedily partake. For the honeymoon him and Shasta will live happily ever after on a tropical isle he owns, reforested with fields of White Rhino. Either there or maybe under a geodesic dome terrarium sunk on the bottom of the ocean with self-contained, recycling everything, surrounded by an ever-changing galaxy of colorful tropical sea life.

Whatever the case, this is how he'll propose.

Excerpted from Adjustment Day, out May 1 from W.W. Norton.



PLAYBOY PROFILE

ZANE LOWE

His influence on what we listen to, and how we listen to it, is almost unparalleled; his passion, and the demons that drive it, go far beyond any algorithm

BY **DAN HYMAN** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **AUSTIN HARGRAVE**

Zane Lowe is right where he needs to be: headphones on, microphone looming in front of him, feet skittering between a trio of mixing boards. Occasionally he bumps the faders, shifting the sound from his ears out to the room via mammoth speakers aimed straight at his face. On this crisp February morning, the New Zealand-born, London-honed and currently Los Angeles-based DJ lords over an airy Culver City recording studio situated across a parking lot from Apple's fortress-like L.A. headquarters. Most weekday mornings he's here, surrounded by a small team of young producers, recording his propulsive, almost manic Beats 1 internet radio show.

For the next two hours, the 44-year-old—who regularly lands some of the biggest interviews

in music, from Kanye West to Ed Sheeran to Morrissey, and in the decentralized age of streaming now stands as one of the few remaining name-brand radio DJs—talks at motormouth speed. He snatches off his headphones as soon as a song has started playing and launches into conversation with any of several onlookers. As is almost always the case with Lowe, today's talk centers on music. A life-long hip-hop fan, he starts assessing the current crop of top-tier talent. Drake is “just so smart!” 2 Chainz is “better than almost everybody.” Donald Glover? “Love him!”

Slim and stubble-headed with a salt-and-pepper beard, Lowe has a reputation for being fanatical about all things music. When he believes in something—an artist, a song or, since

taking his post at Apple in 2015, the power of the music-streaming economy—the man won't hesitate to proselytize. He spent 12 years at BBC Radio 1, where he became the U.K.'s most influential DJ by breaking such A-list artists as Sheeran and Adele; conducting lengthy, emotional and often viral interviews with heavyweight subjects including West, Jay-Z, Rick Rubin and Chris Martin; and bringing a rare and palpable intensity to his show that made every episode feel like a vital listen.

Then Beats co-founder Jimmy Iovine sold his company to Apple for \$3 billion, helped the tech giant imagine a music-streaming service, dubbed it Apple Music and, with help from former Beats chief creative officer and Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor,





convinced Lowe to join the fray. Soon Lowe had relocated to Los Angeles with his wife and two young sons. Assuming the mantle of creative director for Apple Music, he essentially became the controlling voice for the company's new internet radio station, Beats 1.

Now Lowe is a true believer in music's streaming future. Or perhaps he's just a dedicated company man. Either way, tune in to his show on your Apple mobile device any given morning, and if he's getting behind a song, listen as he demands, "Add it! Share it! Keep it moving!"

Lowe came to Apple for a new challenge, something different from a traditional radio gig. And though he admits he originally thought streaming "wasn't even a thing"—more an auxiliary to the music-listening experience than the final destination—he has since become its loudest champion.

"I love how the digital evolution of art and subscription is making things accessible," Lowe says. "I listen to more music than I've ever listened to before." His job in radio had long felt transactional; these days it's more collaborative. "It's not like 'I'll play your record and my job here is done,'" he explains, taking a deep breath before rattling off one of the many mile-a-minute riffs he'll deliver today. "It's more like 'Do you want me to play your record? Do you want me to get it onto playlists? Do you want to start there and work it up to here? When do you want Beats 1 support? Do you want it at the start? Do you want it after three months? How do you want to guide yourself?'"

This cozy relationship with artists tends to rile Lowe's critics. He has long been accused of being every artist's biggest fan; some might propose that, in this way, he's not all that dissimilar to Jimmy Fallon. Then again, Lowe, like Fallon, has seen show business from both sides. Not many people are aware that Lowe is a Grammy-nominated songwriter who wrote for Sam Smith's debut album. He's also a beatmaker and was, for the better part of the 18 years he lived in London,

a regular presence in nightclub DJ booths. "I could never be a critic," he contends. "I just couldn't. I couldn't sit there and go, 'That's an atrocious effort. Terrible collection of songs.' Being a musician is my primary passion and my strength, but it's also a weakness in some people's eyes that I can't sit there and be more critical over things they think are just undeniably shit."

Earlier this year, Lowe interviewed Justin Timberlake and gushed over his new album, *Man of the Woods*, just before the critical establishment almost unanimously trashed it. "As a fan of that record, I don't question my taste," he says. "I believe what I believe, or I wouldn't have said it. I feel bad for him



because I'm as big a fan of him as anybody. But Justin's a big boy; he can forge his own path."

His longtime friend Mark Ronson tells me, "Zane is highly intuitive and sensitive to humanity and understands what it takes to be an artist." And, the music producer adds, "while he might not make you like a shitty song, his enthusiasm for it certainly gets you 20 to 30 percent more hyped on it."

At the outset of today's show, Lowe is doing his best to prove Ronson's point. "One song! One headline! Right around the world! Right around the clock for the next 24! Into all your playlists! You add it! You share it! You keep it moving! This one is huge!" The song in question? Imagine Dragons' new single

"Next to Me." "This is a pensive and beautiful record," Lowe tells the band's lead singer, Dan Reynolds, via a FaceTime call.

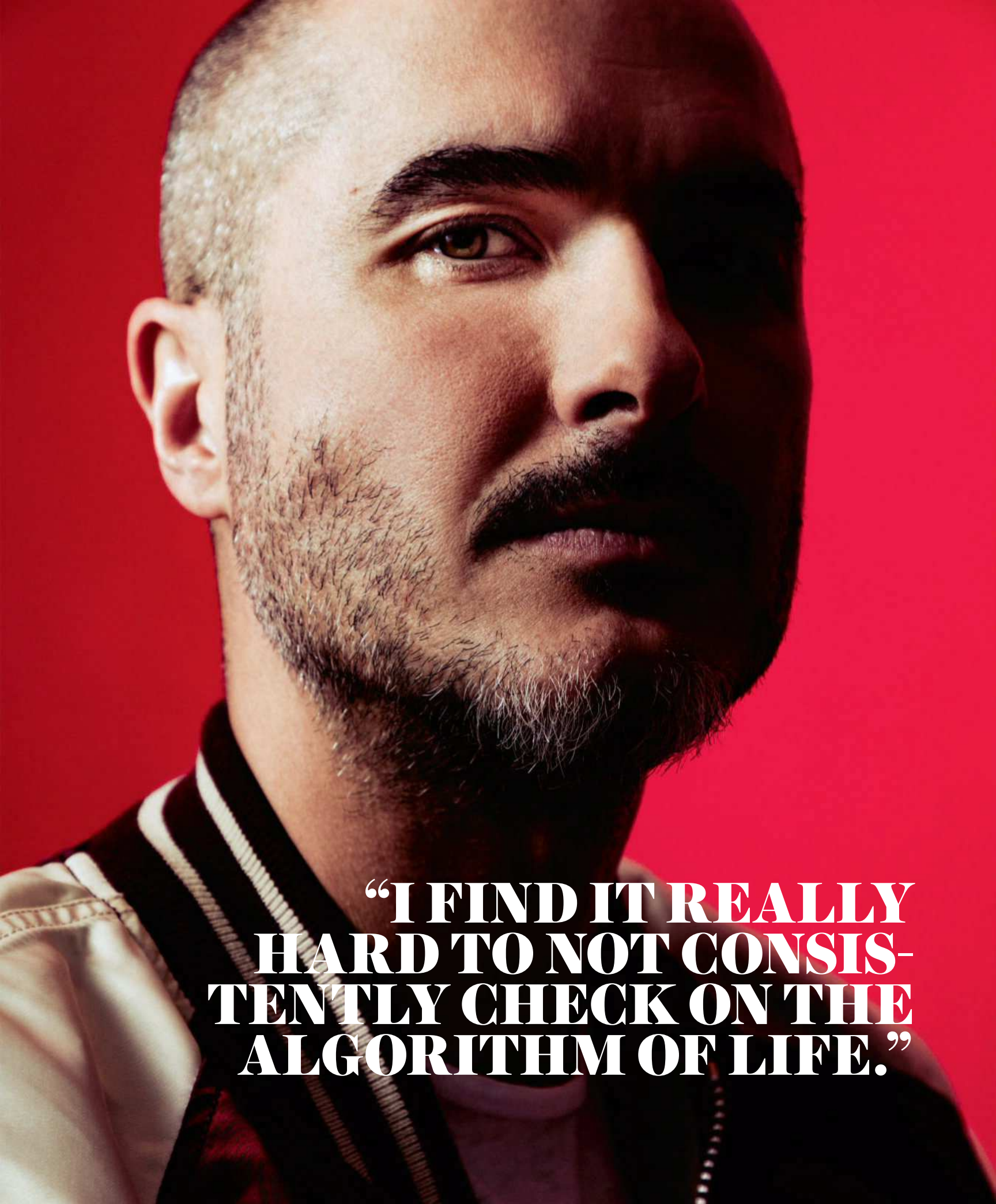
If Lowe is sympathetic to artists, it's because he understands how personal music can be. Beneath the affable but deliberate surface, it's clear that Lowe doesn't simply enjoy music; he needs it.

...

The show concludes, as it always does, promptly at 11 A.M. Not long after, Lowe hops into the backseat of a chauffeured golf cart and heads a few blocks down the pedestrian-filled business-park road to a coffee shop. He sits at a small curbside table and removes his black sunglasses. An order of braised cabbage arrives, and Lowe takes up the subject of music as therapy. Music, he tells me, prevents him from sinking into his ever-present anxiety and intermittent depression. It "keeps me focused on something I love and not drifting off into outer space. So I could be having a terrible day," and then, after perhaps talking up a new song, interviewing an artist he loves or simply gabbing about anything related to music, "that can turn my whole day around. All of a sudden that little seed of doubt, that little thing that's been attacking me, it's gone—or at least way further away than it was before."

Lowe admits he misses the rush of creating and performing music. During his years at the BBC, he'd go to the recording studio every morning to work on music, tape his show and then go out and play the clubs. But his job at Apple is more demanding. Last night, he deejayed a stuffy corporate magazine party, but gigs like those are becoming a rarity. When he moved to the U.S. to work for Apple, he made a personal pledge: "Let's just focus on the show and make sure it works."

Still, even when he's off the air or taking a rare vacation, his obsession is right there. "I find it really hard to switch off," Lowe says. "If my brain's active, I'm probably thinking about something to do with music. I get restless if I'm not doing something with music—manipulating it or creating with it, thinking



**“I FIND IT REALLY
HARD TO NOT CONSIS-
TENTLY CHECK ON THE
ALGORITHM OF LIFE.”**



about it, making a playlist, setting something up. I find it really hard to not consistently check on the algorithm of life.”

...

Lowe was fixated on music from an early age. He grew up in Auckland, the second of two sons. His father, Derek, was one of the original

directors of Radio Hauraki, the first station to break the New Zealand government's then monopoly on broadcasting by operating illegally off the coast—in the process coining the term *pirate radio*. “And you can be sure my mom was down at the dock with him,” he adds of Liz Lowe. “It’s sort of the apple-doesn’t-fall-far-from-the-tree scenario,” he says with a laugh.

As a young child, he would stack cardboard boxes in his basement, wield a pair of chopsticks and imagine he was Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham. He played in bands as a teenager and was a member of an electronic trio called Breaks Co-Op. “But then I started to become older and realized I wanted some money; I wanted some independence,” he says. Recognizing a desire to work in music, Lowe took a job presenting music videos on the local Max TV. In 1997 he relocated to the U.K. There, he hosted XFM’s *Music Response*, and after landing an on-camera job on MTV2, he was hired by the BBC.

Early in his decade-long stint at Radio 1, Lowe became a star. Here was that rare DJ whose word and taste carried so much weight he could single-handedly drive a song up the charts.

Ronson recalls “the power and the trustworthiness” Lowe built with his audience at Radio 1, “and how he could make the entire country interested in a song.” Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich, whom Lowe invited to host his own Beats 1

show, calls him “the coolest motherfucker in the room, on the air, anywhere, really.” As an artist, Ulrich describes interviews with Lowe as “a clear highlight in between the rest of the promotional grind. It was always very energetic and it moved fast. It was like, Whoa, there’s a lot of enthusiasm and energy coming my way!”

In late 2014, when Apple began courting him, Lowe already sensed his time at the BBC might have run its course. “I was always determined to control my exit. I didn’t want to be shown the door,” he says. In Iovine’s telling, he and his team at the then-fledgling Apple Music noticed that Lowe was “constantly interested in what’s happening tomorrow. That was very attractive to us.” So in February 2015, after getting the official green light from his wife, Kara, and informing his sons, Lowe announced he was leaving Radio 1 and heading to Apple.

He has been an Angeleno for three years now, and though he enjoys spending time with his family in their Hollywood Hills home, he admits that adjusting hasn’t always been easy. He misses London: “It’s forever a part of who we are as people and a family and me as a person.

“But when I came to America,” Lowe continues, “I just spent the first three to six months going, ‘Oh my God—I can finally just play rap music really loud in my car and it doesn’t feel strange!’”

...

When I call Lowe one week after my visit to the studio, I find he’s come down with a bad flu. He’s been thinking about our previous discussion and the role his anxiety plays in his obsession with music.

“I’m always looking for something that’s going to keep me rooted in a good moment—something that I can focus on that’s going to allow me to achieve a real value,” he says. “Because otherwise I can spiral off into a lot of what-ifs. What if the world comes to an end?”

As Beats 1 and Lowe’s role at Apple evolve, the DJ says he’s continually gaining more clarity about why he is indeed the right man for the job. He has come to the conclusion that hosting a show, interviewing artists and even the idea of a 24-hour streaming radio station are all rooted in his desire to feel less alone.

“And making music is an extension of that philosophy,” he says. “Like, I’m not alone, and if you’re listening to this, neither are you. Ultimately, as people, we’re just trying to reach out a hand to one another and say, ‘Life is a scary thing from the minute you’re born, but we’re here to do the best we can at connecting with one another.’”

Lowe pauses and adds, “I like the sense that we’re all in this together.” ■



**“I’M NOT ALONE,
AND IF YOU’RE
LISTENING TO
THIS, NEITHER
ARE YOU.”**



"Thanks, Siri, but please limit your directions to my driving."



Mediterranean

Parisian goddess Elisa Meliani graces a Sicilian hillside castello

A woman with dark hair, seen from the back and side, is looking over her shoulder towards a cityscape. She is wearing a purple robe that is open, revealing her back and buttocks. The background shows a hazy city view from a hillside with some dry grass in the foreground.

Morning

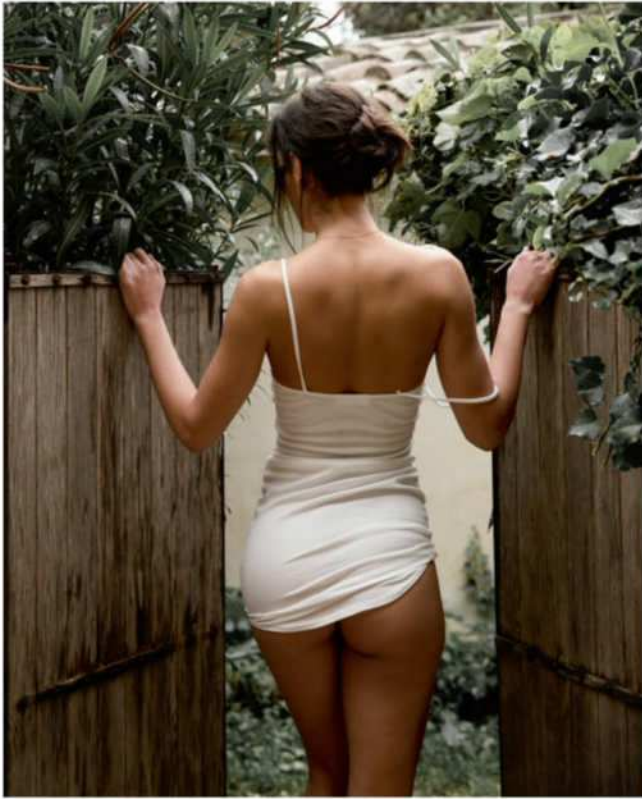
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALI MITTON













Left to right: Mike Eastham, Simon Edwards, Jake Hamby, Alex Manne and Wayne Mitchell.

SURVIVING THE **DARIÉN GAP**

Diehard military careers prepared four veterans to take on a historic motorcycle expedition through one of the most dangerous places on earth, but the jungle had other plans

BY **SCOTT YORKO** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALEX MANNE**



"If you perish in the jungle, what would you like us to do with your remains?"

The question comes from Simon Edwards, whom I met three minutes ago. "The rest of us already talked about it," he goes on, "and we're just going to leave any bodies in there." I tell him I need an hour or two to think about it. He shrugs and launches into a rundown of his "trauma bag": sutures and staples; four eye patches; combat gauze with a hemostatic agent for quicker blood clotting; six liters of IV fluid; intravenous steroids, antihistamines and antibiotics; scalpels; and a chest seal for stabblings that puncture a lung. The bright-eyed 54-year-old veteran and physician's assistant, who has sutured at least four scrotums in his career, spent 20 years in the Special Forces as a medic in more than 10 countries, and apparently he can't help getting excited at the prospect of using all this stuff again.

We're standing in the backyard of a Panama City hostel called Casa Nativa, where shirtless European backpackers sway in nearby hammocks, smoking cigarettes and watching, perplexed, as these middle-aged Americans in flip-flops prepare for some kind of war. On a picnic bench behind Edwards, 43-year-old Wayne Mitchell, the expedition's hawk-faced leader, discusses logistics with our French fixer, who is describing the dead bodies of undocumented migrants he's seen on the trail in the past year.

Mitchell is also a 20-year Army veteran, having served as a platoon leader in Iraq and an urban combat advisor in Mongolia. He, Edwards and two other vets—Mike Eastham, a 50-year-old bearded and tattooed curmudgeon who was twice deployed to Iraq and served as an advisor in Mongolia with Mitchell, and 59-year-old Rich Doering, a retired satellite-systems engineer and Army airborne officer—are two months into the first-ever continuous motorcycle journey from Deadhorse in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska to Ushuaia, Argentina. Their route includes the roadless, lawless jungle known as the Darién Gap, the only break in the 19,000-mile Pan-American Highway system. Driving this course in its entirety is the holy grail of overland motorist expeditions, but almost everyone settles for a Caribbean boat ride that circumvents the 80-mile snarl of jungle. Only a handful of motorists have ever made it through the Gap, and none has completed the whole Alaska-to-Argentina journey in one straight shot.

Becoming the first group to do this is their mission—and the premise of their largely self-funded documentary,



Top: Entering the Darién Gap. **Bottom:** Pizarro and Mitchell in Yaviza, Panama.

Where the Road Ends, which is being filmed by 24-year-old Iraq veteran and combat cameraman Jake Hamby.

Mitchell has been going crazy at his National Park Service office job “like a border collie in an apartment,” he says. Edwards is on the run from a broken heart back home in Colorado, and the other guys just seem to have the time. Below the surface, however, there’s a sense that these men are out to redefine the image of the modern-day veteran. “I don’t want the pinnacle of my life to be my early military career,” Edwards later says from the passenger seat of their 22-foot support van. “I can’t stand going into the VFW with soggy old guys sucking down 75-cent beers, talking about the war days.” He’s not a fan of charities like Wounded Warrior Project, which helps reintegrate veterans into society and provides a range of support programs. “If you’re waiting around for the government or whoever to take you on a fishing trip and make you feel better, it’s not gonna happen,” he says.

The team rejects the common notion that all veterans are screwed-up, dysfunctional

victims incapable of living happy postwar lives. “Among the veteran community there’s this idea that if you don’t have severe PTSD, then you didn’t serve hard enough,” says Hamby. But they also want to distance themselves from the growing crop of tatted blowhards hamming it up for their YouTube channels—toting guns in their living rooms, scarfing MREs and dissing liberals while flanked by women in American-flag bikinis.

Somewhere between these extremes are four men about to enter one of the most dangerous patches on the planet.

...

The Darién region is a haven for drug smugglers, banditos, paramilitary forces and undocumented migrants on desperate and often fatal passages to the United States. Not far from the Colombian village of Cristales, a backpacker was shot execution-style in 2013. A journalist and two backpackers crossing through the Arquía area were kidnapped for 10 days in 2003. And a few years before that, a local farmer in the riverside village of Bijao was decapitated in a violent

operation of mass displacement; his paramilitary killers played soccer with his head.

And those are just the human dangers. In the mountainous ravines—smothered with dank vegetation and under a canopy of trees so dense it’s hard to see more than a few feet beyond your machete—poisonous spiders,

frogs, scorpions, plants and snakes share one of the wettest climates on earth.

The Darién Gap has been regarded as cursed ever since the Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa first set foot on the Isthmus of Panama in 1513. Early explorers were beheaded by subordinates, killed by mysterious diseases and driven to delirious starvation after 49 days of wandering in circles. Motorcyclists attempting to cross the Gap have faced mechanical snafus, suffered severe infections and broken bones or been turned around by Senafront, Panama’s border police force.

Just as ubiquitous as these catastrophes is a collective obsession that keeps these fools coming back for more.

...

The Darién Gap doesn’t feel like such a scary place when, after driving from Panama City to Yaviza and then traveling two days by river deep into the jungle, we nose our dugout canoes (called *piraguas*) up to the banks of the brown Paya River and are greeted by two dozen boys in rubber boots and soccer jerseys. These young, genial Guna Indians, all of them short, with close-cropped hair and wearing gold chains, wave and cheer like a fan club. As the riders prepare to unload their 2017 Kawasaki KLR 650s, they realize that this gaggle of youngsters is the team of porters our Paya-born Guna guide, Isaac Pizarro, has hired for us.

We drag the bikes ashore and into a wall of sugarcane, the stalks towering 10 feet overhead. The sky disappears above us. We begin our slide down the throat of the jungle.

The riders are on their bikes by 7:17 A.M., motoring through the sugarcane where the porters have begun to machete a narrow path. The unassisted riding lasts about 200 yards before we’re stopped at the foot of a steep, muddy hill. “Five more minutes, then all *tranquilo*,” says

THERE’S A SENSE THAT THESE MEN ARE OUT TO REDEFINE THE MODERN-DAY VETERAN.



Pizarro, making a downhill motion with his hand and a quick, emphatic *whoosh* sound. He barely finishes this sentence when rain begins to pour through the trees.

Drenched within minutes, Mitchell tries to gun it up the hill in first gear, revving hard and almost toppling over before jumping off to the bike's side. He keeps giving it gas while pushing the handlebars, spinning the rear tire and kicking up mud as six boys run over to help push and pull the bike uphill. "*Allez! Allez!*" they yell, cheering and clapping when he tops out. Edwards goes next and does the same, followed by Eastham, who leans hard on the throttle without getting off the bike, then Doering, who stalls immediately, dismounts and lets the boys push it up the rest of the hill.

As the slowest and most timid rider, Doering has struggled to keep up with the group since Alaska. Now, with no road to speak of, he can barely get over a root without stalling. "Rich, I know it's hard, man, but you've gotta keep forward momentum," says Mitchell with the patience of a father of two. Under his breath he adds, "We should have reconned further yesterday. It just keeps going *up*."

After a few more hills, our hired help disappears. We figure some are up ahead stashing the food and backpacks at a lunch spot, but as I hike past the bikes and crest the next plateau, I see 12 of them helping themselves to our bag of Panamanian hard candy.

To catch the Darién Gap's short dry season,

from January to February, the *Where the Road Ends* crew left their starting position in Alaska on November 11—an extremely cold and blustery time to be driving from Prudhoe Bay. But just our luck, the Darién region will receive five times more rainfall the week of the expedition than the previous two years combined. It has been pouring every night for seven days, and the jungle floor is an endless puddle of thick, sloppy mud. The tire knobs are caked slick, and the space between the rear wheel and the swing arm of each bike is fully packed with debris. With this added resistance, the riders redline the rpms while feathering the clutch to get some traction. They stop every 15 minutes to clean mud and leaves out of the wheel wells with sticks.

We're only two hours in when Doering burns out his clutch. Edwards and Eastham spend an hour taking the transmission apart to find the clutch fibers worn down to nothing. Farther ahead, Mitchell is rallying the other three bikes up a series of longer, steeper hills. The heat coming off each motorcycle is scorching as the engine temperatures push 240 degrees Fahrenheit; they usually don't exceed 190.

The porters stop working at four P.M. on the dot and begin hacking out a clearing for camp. We string up hammocks while they make beds out of banana leaves and suspend mosquito netting. They prepare a vat of salty white rice and sardines while the team discusses the fate of Doering and his bike.

"It really boils down to mission success," says Doering. "I don't want to keep going if I'm just going to take up space and resources without contributing." The other guys protest, but everyone, including Doering, seems relieved that this is the end of the road for him. There's no time to worry about retrieving his lifeless motorcycle from the jungle, though the locals seem eager to strip it for parts and souvenirs.

The next morning, Doering says a short good-bye and makes his way back to Panama City. Some of the porters head home too, having lost interest in the job. Eastham starts his bike at the bottom of a short incline and spends a few minutes struggling to get over some slick roots. Despite having more aptitude and less timidity than Doering, he got his motorcycle license only two weeks before the trip and may now be the weakest link, throttling heavily and spraying mud into the porters' faces. Out of breath and softly telling the others to go ahead, he stops to rest his head in his hands.

Edwards's and Mitchell's bikes quickly overheat too. As they cool down, Edwards checks his odometer: They're only 1.2 miles from the river where they unloaded.

The farther we get from the Paya, the thicker the jungle becomes. Small snakes slither away from our commotion. Scorpions have taken a liking to crawling inside our backpacks. Ravines cut by the rainy season's heavy flooding are getting deeper and steeper, the banks too challenging to walk up, let alone push a motorcycle over. "Let's stop frying the bikes and use some mechanical advantage," Eastham suggests. They rig a 50-meter steel cable above the ravine with a three-quarter-ton hand crank, hoist the bikes up one at a time, then zip-line them across to the other side. It's time-consuming but a welcome break from the slog.

After one and a half days of dragging, pushing, pulling, hoisting and zipping bikes across brutal terrain, Pizarro tells us the boys have had their fill. They give us a few high fives before vanishing into the bush with a handwritten note to Doering detailing our mechanical predicament—that all three remaining bikes have burned-out clutches and will need to be dragged the rest of the way. Supposedly some new porters are coming over from Colombia tomorrow.

After hiking ahead to the next plateau, we make camp under a *cuipo* tree that's 12 feet in diameter. Mitchell rummages through the pile of white trash bags containing our supplies, but he can't find any of the sardines, bananas, candy or pasta. Only a few cans of Spam are left, along with a couple bags of



Wounaan porters dish up a midday meal.

rice, lentils and salt. As the others prepare to hack through the thick curtain of vines to clear some hammock space, they realize all but one of their machetes is gone, along with three pairs of riding gloves, several cans of bug spray, matches, a spool of 550 cord and a pair of boots. The Guna Indians practice communal living with hardly any possessions, which is beautiful in its own way but doesn't instill in them much concept of personal property. "We should have brought a lockbox," says Mitchell.

Low on supplies and lugging lifeless bikes is not how the team envisioned their great quest playing out, but by now we all know that nothing goes as planned in the Darién Gap. We have no idea where we are or how much farther it is to Colombia, and Pizarro's estimates turn on themselves every time we ask.

To me, nobody seems as worried as he should be. Why hadn't they thought to replace the clutch plates after riding 10,000 miles, including 400 on Alaska's wind-hammered Dalton Highway, before attempting to ride through the untamed jungle? How about a jumper pack or some spare parts? I

thought one of the first rules of military survival is to take care of your feet, yet Mitchell has agonizing blisters from a sockless recon mission in wet rubber boots the day before we left Paya. These guys have operated in wild places with comparably horrific environmental conditions, but without the organizational structure, hierarchical chain of command and robust resources of the military, are they capable of pulling off a mission of this magnitude?

I'm reminded once again that they are walking rejections of vet clichés. Still, they could at least keep better track of their essential equipment. When I look down at my pack's hip belt, I realize my only knife is gone.

...

On our third day in the jungle, it pours rain for hours before daybreak, making the mud even deeper and slipperier. Mosquitoes taking shelter from the rain feast on our flesh through the underside of our hammocks, where there's no bug netting. The 27 new Colombian porters show up two hours late and promptly commence an hour-long breakfast production of rice, plantains and charred

river turtle. Mostly members of the Wounaan tribe, they look older, stronger and more serious than the Gunas. One has a Latin Kings gang tattoo on his neck. Another has a vicious scar on his face and a white, blind eyeball.

When we approach an Africanized "killer" bees' nest the size of an oil drum wrapped around a tree, the Wounaan bull-rush through the swarm, yelling, "*Vay! Vamos a Colombia!*" Eastham hangs back, having developed a bee allergy during jungle-warfare training in this area 25 years ago. Mitchell seizes the opportunity to call Eastham a pussy; Eastham retorts with a comment about Mitchell's intolerance for iodine water treatment. The guys are never too worn down to trade casually emasculating jabs, the kind shared only by close friends who have been through hell together. They also commiserate over the tedious bureaucracies of military administration and swap stories about the tangles of family life—of missing births while on deployment and coming home after nine months to a newly spouseless house.

The following day, we reach a sunny hilltop clearing where a white stone obelisk—Palo de las Letras—marks the Panamanian-Colombian border. The air smells sweeter here; then again, we've barely seen the sky in three days. It's a rare moment of triumph for the team to reach this landmark and finally have a sense of measurable distance. The Wounaan celebrate by using leaves to funnel our Gatorade powder into their bottles of river water. Senafront soldiers emerge from the bush to congratulate us and pose for group photos—but also to remind us that we're on our own once we cross into Colombia.

The ground is firmer on the Colombian side, and the mud quickly dries in the spokes of each bike. We start to see piles of discarded boots and sweatshirts, presumably from migrants trying to shed weight from their already meager belongings. Two emaciated dogs with open wounds on their faces have been following us, and they suddenly take off barking into the woods. "Jaguars," says one of the Wounaan.

After another day and a half of relentless uphill and downhill schlepping between 11 river crossings, we're getting close to the confluence with the Cacarica River, where we'll load up the bikes and begin our jungle departure through fast-moving rapids in tiny, overloaded *piraguas*. Despite having miles of river and ocean and an entire continent left to cross, the team glows with pride at having tackled the bulk of the Darién Gap with motorcycles, a historic feat even if they did end up dragging



Edwards and Mitchell navigate a rare section of jungle where riding with minimal assistance is possible.



WE HAVE NOWHERE TO STAY, NO MORE FOOD AND A STORM MASSING AT THE SKYLINE.

the bikes most of the way. Stoic as they all are, the men give off a glow of camaraderie and a sense of team accomplishment—something they’ve known for most of their adult lives in the military. Facing a death-defying task, relying on one another to execute it and acting like it was just another day on the job are the things so many veterans struggle to replicate in the workplace, with family and in the rest of their daily civilian lives.

But in the Gap, as in war, as soon as you think things are looking up, the fates decide they’re not quite ready to stop fucking with you.

...

We pull into the river village of Cristales, where locals shepherd us into an open-air hut and immediately start arguing with Pizarro. Squealing naked children play soccer and hopscotch in the dirt, but adults keep their distance and stare from the dark doorways of unlit shacks, visibly uncomfortable with the presence of six American gringos in their village. We hear the 20-horsepower motor of a *piragua* taking five men downriver to inform the local paramilitaries of our arrival. “Very dangerous. Very bad,” Pizarro whispers in Spanish. He cocks his arms as if holding a large gun and jerks it upward to mimic the powerful kickback. “*Boom! Boom!* Paramilitaries maybe 30 minutes from here. I want to go right now.”

As we wait to see how the paramilitary authority will receive our unexpected arrival on their turf, the veterans hide their military IDs in their shoes and discuss a plan of action in the event that things get spicy. “I’ll trade ‘em two pulleys and a punch in the mouth for a boat ride out of here,” says Eastham.

Just then, we get an inReach text from Doering saying he has Kawasaki in the U.S. overnighting three new clutch packs to Panama, which he’ll deliver to us in Colombia.

Now we just have to make it out of here. Word from the paramilitary arrives: They will allow us to stay the night as long as we’re gone by dawn, but we still have to float downriver through several of their jungle outposts.

The next morning, our attention turns to the narrow waterway’s transition into a dark swamp. The riverbanks are gone, replaced with thick mangroves in murky water that gets too shallow for our cargo load. On guard for freshwater stingrays, we wade knee-deep as black palm needles work their way into our boots. The Wounaan lift, push and pull the boats over fallen logs, and a barefoot teenager spends 30 minutes with a Stihl MS 660 chain saw, going to work on a mass of trees blocking our path. So of course we think we’re home free seven hours later when the swamp opens up to the larger Atrato River, which is hundreds of yards wide and has large ships pattering up and down it. We just have to abandon our fleet of three *piraguas* for an 18-foot skiff to carry the three motorcycles, all our gear, our six guys plus Pizarro and five more local helpers who all smell like booze.

The sun sets on us as we make a run for the port city of Turbo, where the team hopes to get the bikes running again and reunite with their support van before continuing on the journey south. We stop for gas in a floating pirate village where two Colombian military boats are parked, loaded to the gills with ammunition and 50-caliber gunners. The commander is refusing to let us cross the ocean bay to get to Turbo at night, but we have nowhere to stay, no more food and a storm massing at the



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAKE HANBY

Top: Senafront soldiers, Wounaan people and the team pose at Palo de las Letras. **Bottom:** Mitchell and Edwards work their way down the Cacarica River.

skyline. After much of our pleading and pestering in bad Spanish, a younger military official scrawls something on a scrap of paper, presumably absolving them of all liability. We have no idea what it actually says, but we sign it anyway and take off.

Under a Cheshire cat moon and advancing clouds, we crash through open water. The boat lurches as we grip the motorcycles to keep them from tipping over. Everyone is silent. Eight days have passed since we entered the jungle. They may have made history, surviving the Darién Gap at its worst, but at this moment everyone is focused on staying out of the dark, violent water. There are more rivers, more mountains to come. I can’t help feeling this is a high-stakes covert military operation, only there’s no backup and nobody has any idea where we are.

The fear and uncertainty are palpable. That’s exactly what they came for.

At press time, the Where the Road Ends crew was still on the road, headed south through Chile. Their film is slated to premiere in 2019.





PLAYMATE

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

June Playmate and Golden State girl **Cassandra Dawn** proves that summer is a state of mind

Equal parts introspective and exuberant, Cassandra Dawn projects the power to adapt to any situation. Maybe that's because she established her independence early. "I didn't have an easy life growing up," says the southern California native. "I was on my own at a really young age and working full-time at 16. Not because I had to; it was purely by choice." Or perhaps it's a result of her professional background: Cassandra, who owes her arresting looks to her Filipino and Bangladeshi heritage, didn't get serious about modeling until 2014. "I used to be an art dealer," she explains. "I feel my life has gone backward! Very early on I had a super-serious career with a lot of responsibilities. I'd look out from the gallery in Beverly Hills and miss being a kid."

Selling Warhols and Harings at the age of 21 brought her into contact with high-profile photographers, some of whom urged her to give modeling a try. "I thought, Yeah, right. I'm *so* not fit for that. Eventually, I asked myself, What's more important: making a lot of money and having no time to enjoy it, or taking a risk and seeing what happens?" For Cassandra, taking that risk has paid off in spades. Today she models full-time. She's happily single and secure in her personal definition of sex appeal: "I believe in letting your elegance come through. Every woman has a different type of sexiness she likes to exude, and for me, subtlety speaks louder." She flashes a broad smile. "I like to leave a little to the imagination—most of the time!"

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY **KYLE DELEU**



















"For the last time, ma'am—we're definitely not strippers."







DATA SHEET



BIRTHPLACE and CURRENT CITY: Los Angeles, California

L.A. WOMAN

I travel whenever I can. I've been to London, Paris and Thailand in the past few months, and this summer I plan to go to Italy. I love to experience new cultures. Then again, the second I'm gone for more than a week, I get homesick for Los Angeles.

ALL THAT GLITTERS

I live smack-dab in the middle of the entertainment industry, and a lot of people here are really selfish. Being showy is a huge sign of insecurity. I gravitate to people who are genuinely caring and kind toward others.

POWER OF LOVE

One of the first things I look for in a person is a capacity to love. Are you comfortable with the idea of actually loving? Are you genuinely interested in other

people and their stories? A lot of people are afraid of closeness. Not everyone should *want* to be in love, but if I'm considering someone to be my serious boyfriend, that's necessary.

TRUE ROMANCE

It's not about love letters and flowers; it's about being thoughtful. A guy who is present is attractive.

MAN UP

I like guys who are manly. It's attractive when a man knows how to do things with his hands—like if he sees something in my house is broken, he'll grab a toolbox and fix it. Good hygiene is also important.

HAPPY PLACES

I love to be in the sun. I love to be on the beach. I'm not a cocktail person, but I drink a lot of wine. Ever since visiting Paris, I have

loved rosé. I also adore Italian food, but because I lead a healthy lifestyle, I eat a lot of sushi.

MUSIC MUSINGS

I feel sexiest when I'm taking my time getting ready and playing music. I love acoustic guitar, and I love John Mayer and the Black Keys. "She's Long Gone" is such a sexy song—and when I was doing my PLAYBOY shoot, the song came on! It was a full-circle moment.

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

I learned how to play the guitar when I was 12. I do covers for fun. It's truly the one thing I do just because I like it and not for any other reason. Living in Los Angeles, you set your goals so high and the lifestyle is so fast-paced. It's important to do small things for yourself that aren't about your future or making money.

Cassandra Dawn

@cassandradownxo





Jacket by **Death
to Tennis**; sweater
by **A.P.C.**; pants by
Salvatore Ferragamo;
belt by **Maximum Henry**.



Vocal powerhouse **Leon
Bridges** offers a primer
on eye-catching retro
style—and sounds off on
his new album, his Texas
roots and his definition
of protest music

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **HARPER SMITH**
WORDS BY **PAUL THOMPSON**
STYLING BY **IAN BRADLEY**

BLVD

Jacket by **Dunhill**; shirt
by **Carhartt WIP**.
↓

IRVIAN



Blazer and shirt by
David Hart; trousers
and shoes by **Salvatore
Ferragamo**.



Leon Bridges opens his new album, *Good Thing*, with the deceptively simple line “I better slow down.” The 28-year-old Fort Worth native’s life has indeed been moving at a breakneck pace: In the span of two years he went from dishwasher to Grammy nominee. He kicked off his career—and a major-label bidding war—with the elegiac single “Coming Home.” His 2015 debut album of the same name reverently evokes Sam Cooke and Otis Redding, but his sophomore set, out May 4 on Columbia, is richer and more ambitious, full of musings on his parents’ migration across the South. Bridges conjures postwar American culture in his style as well as in the studio. He’s given to slim suits and polished leather shoes, even if he still harbors memories of the fitted-cap collection he amassed in high school. When *PLAYBOY* caught up with him, he was in Shreveport, Louisiana, preparing for a show—still for a moment.

What do you find so compelling about mid-century American style?

It’s a powerful statement to dress that way because it’s not common for a black man to do that kind of fashion. And for me, I think it was just a great time; I love the high-waisted pants. So much care went into certain styles back then.

Fashion-wise, what are people doing better today than back then?

I love that style, but I’m not stuck in the past. I’m also inspired by A\$AP Rocky, Lil Uzi Vert and those guys. You can take stuff from the past but also combine it with modern things.

What kind of fashion phases did you go through in high school?

I graduated in 2007, so the big thing back then was tall tees and faded baggy jeans—and, you know, Filas. [laughs] My style has definitely evolved.

How did growing up in the South influence the way you dress today?

One thing I take from the South is the whole country-western look. You’ve got guys wearing bolo ties and Stetsons and Western shirts. I like to incorporate that.

A lot of contemporary R&B is minimalist—sort of cool and steely—but *Good Thing* is full and lush. Where did you draw inspiration from this time?

Man, all that’s just from the influences I’ve gathered on my journey. You can point out guys like R. Kelly, Usher and Townes Van Zandt that I pull inspiration from. A lot of R&B today feels, to me, kind of shallow—but it all sounds good. I

Shirt and belt by **Willy Chavarria**; pants by **Unis**.



THAT'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN GROWING INTO: LOVING MYSELF.



Sweater by **A.P.C.**; shirt by **3.1
Phillip Lim**; trousers by **Death
to Tennis**; shoes by **Dsquared2**;
socks by **The Sock Man NYC**.





wanted to make music that's intentional. *Good Thing* is a diverse album, but it's not a huge, conceptual thing. It's just my experiences with relationships and songs of triumph, and my narrative.

You made the album with Ricky Reed, who's known for producing pop hits for the likes of Twenty One Pilots and Meghan Trainor. What drew you to him?

A story about that: Before we made this album we collaborated on a DeJ Loaf song—she's from Detroit, an amazing rapper. In that session he was able to push me to record a vocal that was not really in my register. I felt if he could push me out of my comfort zone, he could bring me into something new for this project. It was super collaborative; he's a real musician. He could have made *Coming Home Part Two* if he wanted to, but our goal was to make something fresh.

Has the Trump administration made you reconsider the role of an artist in society?

It definitely has made me rethink my role as a musician, and I think it's on us to speak on those things when it's the right time. But I don't want to just throw that in a song and rush it; I want it to be organic—for it to make sense and still be a good song at the end of the day. But honestly, I don't even think about Trump. What I think about is how I can better myself and be impactful to somebody else, to people in my neighborhood. That's the only way it's gonna get done.

On the last song from *Good Thing* you sing about being a kid in school, and then you say, "I fell short of what true blackness was." What made you feel that way?

It was definitely my peers in high school. I feel like this is still something that's happening: not living up to the standard of what a "true black person" should be. Growing up, if you don't meet that certain standard—if you're not hood enough or ghetto enough, or if you have the desire to better yourself—you're white. That's kind of what I dealt with, and with not really being comfortable with my own self and identity.

Have you found some sort of resolution with those feelings?

Definitely. I'm comfortable not looking like everybody else. That's something I've been growing into: loving myself. It has been a struggle as a musician, and not being a person who has a perfect look. But I've definitely been growing to loving myself and being comfortable in my own skin. ■

Jacket by **Kenzo**; shirt by **Maison Kitsuné**; pants by **Willy Chavarria**; shoes by **Converse**.



Hellboy: Return of the Lambton Worm

STORY:
MIKE MIGNOLA

ART:
BEN STENBECK

COLOR:
DAVE STEWART

LETTERS:
CLEM ROBINS

NORTH YORKSHIRE,
ENGLAND. 1960.



WORM?

JUST
ANOTHER
WORD FOR
DRAGON.

IT'S
TRUE.

OLD JOHN
LAMBTON WAS
SUPPOSED TO BE IN
CHURCH, BUT HE WENT
FISHING INSTEAD AND
CAUGHT SOMETHING LIKE
AN EEL. HE TOLD PEOPLE
HE'D CAUGHT THE DEVIL
AND THREW IT INTO
A WELL...



"THEN HE WENT
OFF TO THE
CRUSADES..."



WHILE HE WAS
GONE THE THING GREW
TO BE HUGE, CRAWLED UP
OUT OF THE WELL, AND
TOOK TO TERRORIZING THE
COUNTRYSIDE--EATING UP
THE CATTLE, CHILDREN,
CRUSHING ALL THE
SOLDIERS SENT TO
KILL IT...















FICTION

Between the Records

Los Angeles, 1987—trying to make beautiful music can get ugly

Dad and his new wife Elina were living in a one-bedroom apartment in Hollywood—mattress on the floor, filthy bathroom, clothes everywhere, dishes stacked in the sink. The front door opened onto a corridor overlooking a tiny fenced-in swimming pool. Don't go out onto Hollywood Boulevard, Dad warned Adam and me—too many junkies, muggers and prostitutes. The other tenants were a mixed bag of Sid-and-Nancys and Ike-and-Tinas. Dad said he and Elina didn't plan on staying long; they would get a proper apartment. You just couldn't beat that \$125 weekly rate. And it was all they could afford now. In a few months he would start seeing royalty checks from his first record, which had just gone gold, but it took time for that money to funnel through all those pipes into his account. He said that the next time we came out to see him, we should

expect to go to sleep to the sound of something other than alley cats in heat.

Dad spent the daytime hours behind the bedroom door, writing his second record. He didn't come out, not to eat or stretch his legs or say hello. He had a coffeemaker and perhaps a sandwich and a bottle of pills or a bag of blow in there with him. My brother and I would put our ears to the door and listen to him play. But to make sense of the still-unformed songs through the thick wood separating us was impossible. He was stopping and starting and picking up at odd places, rewriting words one moment and testing new melodies the next. I imagined his chest leaned over the curved upper half of his Gibson acoustic, his long black hair held back in a rubber band, a writing pad pinned between the guitar and his right thigh, his left hand up on the guitar neck, a pick between his teeth and a pen

behind his ear and a tape recorder on the desk just in front of him. Every few minutes he moved from the chair to the windowsill, then to the bed and to the edge of the desk, before returning to the chair and scribbling down another line or two and crossing out others. He smoked a cigarette and listened back to the tape, recorded a new version of the same track and then moved on. At the end of a day he emerged looking worn-out, unwell.

This evening, after yet another full day of writing—his fourth since our arrival, five days ago—Dad went straight from the bedroom out the front door, had a swim, came back, showered, put on a bathrobe and then dropped down onto the couch and began staring at the television. He put his arm around my older brother.

"How's it going, Adam?"

"Mmm."

BY **JULIAN TEPPER**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **JEREMY ENECIO**



“Baby, we got to get down and make love tonight. I want to have a song on their desk by Monday.”

“You’re bored?” Dad said.

“Yeah.”

“You too, Jules?”

“What?”

“You’re bored too?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that’s great,” he said. “So you’re both bored.”

Our attention shifted back to the television. Bugs Bunny. Dad, skinny and strung out, red-eyed, began accusing us of a failure of imagination. There was a pool outside, he shouted, the sun was shining. If he was our age, he would have spent the whole day in that pool, and he would have been happy about it too. Did we know what our problem was? We were spoiled. We got everything we wanted from our mother, and we didn’t know how to appreciate anything.

Fortunately, Elina came out of the bathroom and started to defend us. “The kids just want to see you, Walter. They have a right to be upset. They came all this way.”

“Give me a break! They are seeing me. Here I am.” Dad held his hands out to the sides.

“They were in the pool all day. It’s six o’clock,” Elina said. “They want to do something else... something with their dad.”

“I know, I know, you want to go spend my last hundred bucks on dinner, a dinner you won’t even appreciate because you don’t appreciate anything.”

“Calm down. You’re freaking out, and you’re making things worse.”

“Oh yeah, am I?”

“Just get out of here, Walter. Come back when you’ve pulled yourself together.”

Dad only had to be told. He put on his leather jacket and slammed the door behind him without a word. Elina didn’t run after him. She took a seat on one end of the couch, next to Adam, shaking her head. Her

husband, our father, was crazy, she said. He had no self-control. He wasn’t good at saying what he needed. It was idiotic, childish. Now he was out there on Hollywood Boulevard, furious, in pain.

Elina was 24, from Stockholm. She had been in the country just over two years and married to our father for seven months. They had met on the dance floor of an L.A. nightclub about a year ago, while Dad was out here recording his first album at the Capitol Records Building. On his return to New York, Mom had found Polaroids in Dad’s suitcase—and with those photos, one marriage had ended, making room for the next. Elina’s two front teeth, a gap between them, were set slightly forward because she still sucked her thumb. Her long blonde hair was swept into a ponytail; she had bangs. She wore a black T-shirt, sleeves torn off and bottom cut to expose her navel, her large chest bulging behind the dark fabric, and a pair of white underwear but no pants. She crossed her legs. Like our own mother, Elina didn’t wear much around the home. And, as with our own mother, sometimes you had to look away. But now she was staring straight at us.

“He loves you guys. You know that, right? He feels bad that he can’t spend more time with you. He doesn’t want to fail you. So he gets upset when he sees you’re not happy. And of course he feels a lot of pressure about the second record. He wants it to be great.”

“I hate him,” Adam said.

“No you don’t,” I told him. I didn’t want to think it was possible.

“No, I really do. I hate him.”

“Stop saying that,” I said.

Just then, Dad returned. He didn’t speak but stalked into the bedroom and swung the door shut. The tension in the dead-quiet room was enough to make me sick. I heard Dad’s guitar knock against wood, perhaps the desk or a

chair leg. He strummed for about 20 seconds before cursing. “Fuck! Unbelievable!”

I grimaced. Adam lowered his head. But Elina wasn’t going to put up with this. She went into the bedroom, and then they were arguing. She said he had two minutes to pull it together or else she was sending us home to New York and *she* was going to a girlfriend’s apartment for the rest of the week. But Dad was unreachable. He was shouting, as if he were trying to hit the back row of an arena with his voice, that we *should* go back to New York, and Elina *should* go to a girlfriend’s apartment, and that that would be fine by him. To emphasize his point he kicked the bedroom door; we saw it shake from our seats on the couch. I could feel myself ready to cry, and I turned to my brother, saw the rage building behind his dark eyes.

He said, “Come on. Let’s go.”

I followed Adam down to the pool. We sat side by side on the diving board with our feet in the water and discussed going home early. Was it an option? Could we go? Tonight? What did it cost to change a plane ticket? Was Mom even in New York? Or was she away with her boyfriend? Maybe we could go to New Jersey and stay with Dad’s parents. We couldn’t remain here. That was impossible.

“We have to protect each other,” I said.

“We will,” my brother answered.

“Promise me.”

“I promise.”

...

All of a sudden Billy appeared. Uncle Billy, we called him. Billy Andrews—long brown hair, light eyes, five o’clock shadow; he wore blue jeans and a brown suede vest with a white T-shirt underneath. He and our father were old friends, songwriting partners. Dad had played bass in Billy’s band, and together they had written “Up in the Sky,” which became a hit for Billy, who performed it, as well as for Dad, its



co-author. The song had peaked in the top 10 and earned a Grammy nomination.

We weren't sure what Billy was doing here; we hadn't been told he was coming. But he picked me up, chortling "Boobie baby, oh baby, boobie," as he embraced me, then threw me over his shoulder before tossing me in the pool. Adam outweighed me by 20 pounds, but Billy, thin yet built, swung him under his arm too, squeezed his head to his chest and then lobbed him into the water.

Billy, surely high on cocaine, couldn't believe how big we'd gotten. The last time he'd seen us, he said, was back on 94th Street. "Adam, baby, you were naked, I remember, and you had my new LP in your hands and you were covering up your privates with the album sleeve, which was real cute, yeah. And Julie, baby, you were sucking on your mama's tit. God bless the lord. God bless him!" Billy kneeled down. He said that Uncle Billy thought of us as his own baby boys and we could always count on him for anything we ever needed and we should spend more time together because life went too fast and he couldn't stand to think that the whole thing could pass us by without the three of us having more time together. He waved his arms around to emphasize his excitement, no longer about the fact that we were seeing one another for the first time in five years but because the world and God and love and Los Angeles and my father and Elina and the sky and the air and the universe was a gift that we had to celebrate right now.

"You know what I'm saying, babies? You hear Uncle Billy? God, your dad and I are going to write some hits this week. *That* I know. Billy's been at his piano all day writing songs like you never heard before. I'm talking James Brown and Stevie Wonder and John Lennon stuck their golden hands deep down into my belly and sent a message to me that went right through my hands and up into my head and I started to sing—and wham bam thank you ma'am, we are back. You know I love you, don't you? You know Billy loves you. Oh God, you two are beautiful. You are my beautiful boys."

Adam and I stared up at Billy from the pool, our hair in our faces, ears clogged with water. Billy threw each of us a towel and told us to dry off and take him up to the apartment because he had big news to tell our father. Any fears about what was happening between Dad and Elina were vanquished. Billy was too powerful a force, his presence shone too brightly, his enthusiasm was larger than any conflict—and we followed behind him, jogging up the stairs. Billy threw open the door. The apartment was quiet.

"Anybody home?" Billy shouted. He looked back at us, grinning. "Where's my hit-maker? Where's my second wife? Come on, kids, get out here and give me some love. I'm about to make you wish you could live forever."

Dad stepped out of the bedroom, his eyes small and corrupted by mania. Elina walked just behind him, her face red from tears and her blonde hair disheveled. But Billy was too disposed to joy—and, yes, high on drugs—to let anything spoil his good feeling.

"Baby, baby, baby, *baby*...all my babies look so sad and I don't care if you think you're face-to-face with the end of the world, but you guys have got too much love in your hearts and too much beauty in your souls to let the pain take over and get the better of your minutes here on God's earth."

"Billy, please," my dad said. He was at the fridge, drinking from a liter of orange juice. "Not now."

"Not now, Walty? Not now!" Billy held his hands out toward my father. "Baby, you got a beautiful wife and you got your holy, holy children and the day is growing old, my friend, and we got to get on with the loving 'cause there ain't no encore in this game. Now, what in the world could be tearing you boys and girls up like this that you can't find the glory of this day in your heart? Give it to me. Tell Billy. Tell him. Let him know. I want to hear what hurts. I got to know what hurts you so bad inside that the tears are running down your sweet, sweet wife's eyes."

Dad said, "Billy, this is not the time, okay?"

"Okay, you say? Okay? No, boobie, no. No, no, no. I need love. I need you to give me the Walty Newman love I come for. Okay, you got to take the time now to clear the black from your heart and find the love. Now, would it help if I told you I been on the phone all day with Polydor"—the label had released Billy's last two records—"and they want another album and that I need Walty, my hit-maker, to testify with a cut or two or three? Baby, we got to get down and make love tonight. I want to have a song on their desk by Monday."

"I'm working on my record, Billy. I don't have time."

Billy brought his hands through his hair, blew air out his mouth, then stared, first at Elina, then at me and Adam, a long stare that asked each of us to question whether this was my father or some impostor. Then, as if he were working out the chorus of a song, he said, "Oh, baby, baby, baby, baby, baby, baby, baby..."

Billy dreamed big. He believed God had given him one of the greatest rock-and-roll voices ever and that he would be as successful,

as famous, as Bruce Springsteen or Bob Seger; that was that. He was always after my father to help him take over the world. They had written one big hit, in 1980. Now it was 1987. If you had asked Billy seven years earlier how many chart-toppers they'd have penned by now, Billy would have asked how many Hall and Oates had to their credit and then he would have told you to double the number. But alas, Billy and Dad were stuck at one. And Billy, speaking to my father in this depressing Hollywood apartment, and feeling all the anger and despair and darkness pulsating between these walls, was stupefied by my father's resistance but far from giving up.

"So you're saying my most talented master songwriter can't spend a couple of extra hours this week at the piano with his brother-in-arms, his best man Billy, and get down a little harder? The people are dying for more. They are dying, Walty, dying to turn on their radios and make love to Walty and Billy, and God tells me that we got no choice but to give them what they want. Are you going to say no? Julie, baby! Adam, baby! You think your daddy should say no to me right now when what I'm offering is to dance right back to the top of the airwaves and earn a mint and give love to the world?"

The air-conditioning was on, and my wet bathing suit was cold against my legs. This was no time to open my mouth. Adam, likewise, kept his shut. But Elina said, "Billy, Walter is having a hard time."

"Oh, well, God gave me eyes and I can see that my brother is hurting. I will ease your pain, Walty."

Billy had seen action in Vietnam. Though he never mentioned the details of his tour, he did like to bring up—as he did now—the fact that he'd nearly lost his life and that he would not waste a minute feeling pity for himself. "Oh, yes, you know where I've been, Walter, and you know I can't talk about it, not here, in front of the kids and your beautiful wife. But we cannot waste our time in this world. Any minute could be our last. We've got to do what we've been put here to do, and for you and me that's write great songs. Come to me, Walty. Don't say no. I need you. And you need me. Now let's bring it on home."

Dad didn't say yes, but Billy had shaken him from his black-dog mood, gotten him to smile. Dad said, "You're out of your fucking mind, you know that?"

"I do know that, Walty. But that's why Billy's one of the special ones, damn it. I love you. I love you so much, Walty. I love your boys. I love your wife. I'm crazy and in love with all of you so much it makes me want to cry and sing and



write hit songs. Right now, though, right now, I think it's time we go eat some cheeseburgers. Your kids look hungry."

...

We went to a diner on Sunset and took a booth in the back with windows facing out at a dumpster. Billy told the waitress we were definitely going to need a plate of french fries right away, and a couple of chocolate milkshakes, and that these boys, that is, Adam and I, were from New York City. "In L.A. for a little fun!" He was laughing and pointing and shooting knowing looks at the waitress as if they had a history. But the waitress was unimpressed or didn't care, and she asked if we still needed menus. Billy, slapping his hands to the table and gazing deeply into Adam's eyes, then mine, shook his head and said five cheeseburgers medium rare would do but to hold the lettuce and keep any coleslaw that might come on the side as far from the table as she could.

"Thanks, darling. You have a gorgeous soul."

The waitress was over 60, her eyeshadow was the orange of a smoggy L.A. sky at sunset, her hair was white and heavily curled, and her lips looked like they'd pulled on over a hundred thousand cigarettes. She flipped her pad closed and gave Billy a wink. Billy returned

the gesture and said, "Billy loves you." Then he turned to Dad and began to tell him how much he missed him and that he had been writing more songs than ever, tunes were spilling out of him fully formed, with words and melodies and piano lines, but that he was hearing Dad's voice in the room with him, these harmonies that Dad would have to add to the tracks. In particular, to the chorus of a song called "Memory Repeats." Billy began to sing the part right there at the table:

"'Mem-or-y...re-peats...dah...day...day...dah...day...dah.' And Walty, Walty, you go"—now Billy sang in falsetto, with all 10 of his fingers opening like the petals of a tulip above his head—" 'Mem-or-y...re-peats.' Like that, up there, 'Re-peats!' I got a tape of it in the car. We'll take a drive up in the hills after we eat and have a couple of listens, talk it out, then pop over to my place and spend the night at the piano, treating our souls to the mercy, the mercy, Walty, that they're crying out for."

Dad nodded. By now, his coloring, his brow, his posture, were commensurate with the sort of relief that came with letting go, the gratitude of being free of it. Though Billy was responsible for Dad's improved mental state, this didn't mean that Dad was pleased to be in

Billy's company or that he was even comfortable around him in general. Dad was at his best with Billy when the two old friends were seated together at a piano with a pen and pad resting on the music stand with a song in the works.

I could remember them in the living room on 94th Street, going from noon until the early morning hours. At the piano, at work with Billy, Dad was confident, focused, open, inspired. But anywhere else, with the God wants me to go to number one Billy, with the Billy loves you more than you could ever know Billy, with the day is too beautiful to let sadness into your heart Billy—anywhere with any of these other Billys, and Dad grew irritable. He looked up to Billy, who was four years older and had already released three solo records and experienced what it was to be a pop star. Dad craved a mentor-disciple relationship with Billy, and the acceptance and confirmation that came with that. Yes, had Billy asked my father how his record was coming along, or if he wanted to play any of the cuts and talk about them, or if he could help in any way; had he been able to quiet the part of himself that made my father truly bristle most—that is, the Billy who, like right now, raved on evangelically about the two of them writing number one hits—this would have brought my father to life, caused him to open up and treat Billy with love.

"Oh, that burger is juicy. Hey, Julie, baby... Adam...now, you know...you know that your daddy's the most handsome man in rock and roll, don't you? I'm saying, I have met every leading man in the business and there is no better-looking living example than your daddy." Billy was hunkered over the table, his grin mischievous yet serious. "Now, Elina, you cover up your ears if you have to, but the boys have got to know this about their daddy, okay? Boys, I'm telling you, more women have fallen in love with your daddy than any man to grace a stage, including Elvis Presley—and that's the truth. Just look at him. Look at that face, those eyes, those lips. Walty Newman is a lady-killer, and the day he married you, beautiful," he said to Elina, "a million sweet young girls cried themselves to sleep. Yes, they cried, and I heard them and I held them and I told them that it was all going to be okay, because Billy was going to write a song for them, for all the girls who couldn't have Walty Newman of Hoboken, New Jersey."

"Billy, the boys don't have to hear this."

"Sure they do! They do, they love to hear it. Don't you, boys? Don't you? You know how good a daddy you got, don't you?"

"Yeah," we said.

Billy reached over the table and took my father's head in his hands. "Walty, you got it all,





If he was on stage, he was throwing roses to the girls in the front rows, confessing his love for them.

my brother. You have got it all.” He let go of Dad and then said to him, “I’m so proud of you. You inspire me, baby.”

...

Dad went off with Billy after dinner, who knows where. But the next day, when I told Dad how nice it had been to see Billy and what a terrific guy he was and funny too, Dad said that Billy was great, sure, that everyone loved Billy and that Dad did too, that they were like brothers, but that Billy could be a real pain in the ass. He swung in, from nowhere. You never saw Billy coming, because if he called and told you he was on his way then he’d be forfeiting the impact of blindsiding you, which would decrease his chances of getting what he wanted. That’s right, he was never there just to say hi and give you an hour about what he had been up to since the last time and to find out about your life. There was always an agenda, my father was telling me as I worked the foldout bed in the living room back into a couch. You saw Billy and you had to deal with a whole vision that included you and every second of your life.

“And I’ve got nothing to give him right now. Nothing,” my father said sharply.

We were alone together in the apartment, Adam and Elina down at the pool. I folded the blanket, straightened the pillows, avoiding Dad’s eyes. It would have been the wrong time to tell him how last night Billy had saved us *from* Dad, and that I was grateful to him. That if Billy hadn’t showed up when he had, Dad and Elina would have fought all night. Who knew if we would have ever gotten around to dinner. And we would have gone to sleep to their screaming.

“He’s telling me, ‘Just come over for a week and we’ll write a whole record.’ But he doesn’t see what I’m going through. He doesn’t care that I’m making a solo record of my own right now. It means nothing to him. It’s all about Billy, Jules.”

“Yeah.”

“And I gave him 10 years. I did the Billy thing for 10 years. Now I’m doing me, and I can’t let him in. I just can’t do it!”

“Okay, Dad.”

“There’s a lack of respect,” he said. “He takes no interest in my work, unless it benefits him. And what kind of friend is that? I mean, I don’t even know if he ever listened to the first record. He might have put it on. But I mean, did he really *listen*? I doubt it. He had no comments whatsoever about any of it. And it’s just unbelievable. Because I’ve supported him so long. I have dug in so hard to his music, written so much of it with him, and know it all so well. But there’s no reciprocation, Jules. It’s just all about him. And you know, music’s not like that. Sure, you’re competing with your peers, but you’re also in it together, and you want to know what everyone’s making and, if possible, let it inspire you. But not with Billy. At least not when it comes to me and my solo career. Maybe he’s threatened I’m going to outdo him. As far I’m concerned, that’s no excuse. He says he loves me. Well, he’s got to love me when I’m doing better than him too. He’s got to champion me, just like I do him.”

We went to the Ralphs to buy a loaf of bread and a dozen eggs. I was following Dad through the grocery store, and I could tell he was lost in the aisles, distracted, almost happily, talking about the pain and fear and confusion of a person who goes out and seeks the acceptance of all people, who cannot bear to be disliked by anyone, cannot tolerate it, and will try to take down in the eyes of others any person who does not or cannot be made to love him.

But Billy was a performer, Dad was saying, always turning it on. If he was on stage, he was throwing roses to the girls in the front rows, confessing his love for them—and their city—from down on his knees, and begging after the

second encore to never let the night end because it was going to hurt him too much to say good night. And if he was having a meeting with the heads at Polydor he was swiveling in his chair, rolling his shoulders and snapping his finger in time with a song he was making up right there on the spot, and then telling those executives how lucky they were to have a voice like his on their label and how the good lord had blessed Billy by bringing them together so that his voice could get to the people. And if he was in your mother’s living room, he was telling her that she was the most beautiful woman he’d ever seen in all his life and that he’d like to move right into her house if she’d let him because there seemed to him no better place to live in the whole wide world. Even the guy washing his car would have been asked what he was doing shining windshields when he was handsome enough to be a leading man in Hollywood. The routine was practiced, but it was genuine; it came from a real place inside him. Becoming that person was so natural for Billy. Dad said so now, not without adding, however, that a part of it was schtick, a game that Dad was not willing to participate in.

“But I worry about Billy, Jules. I do,” he said breathlessly. “You look at him and you think he’s having the best time, that life’s so good for him, but he’s in a lot of pain. A lot of pain.”

“Is he?”

“Anyone who expends that kind of effort trying to make everyone love him is destroyed inside.”

“Can you help him, Dad?”

My father shook his head. And for a moment, in the dairy aisle at Ralphs, I could tell my father felt above Billy. He might have loved his friend, yes, but he was taking pleasure in the thought that between the two of them, Billy was the truly damaged one. ■



Under the Mangroves

*It can get pretty steamy in the jungles of Bali, especially with **Raluca Cojocar** as your guide*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RUBY LAW**















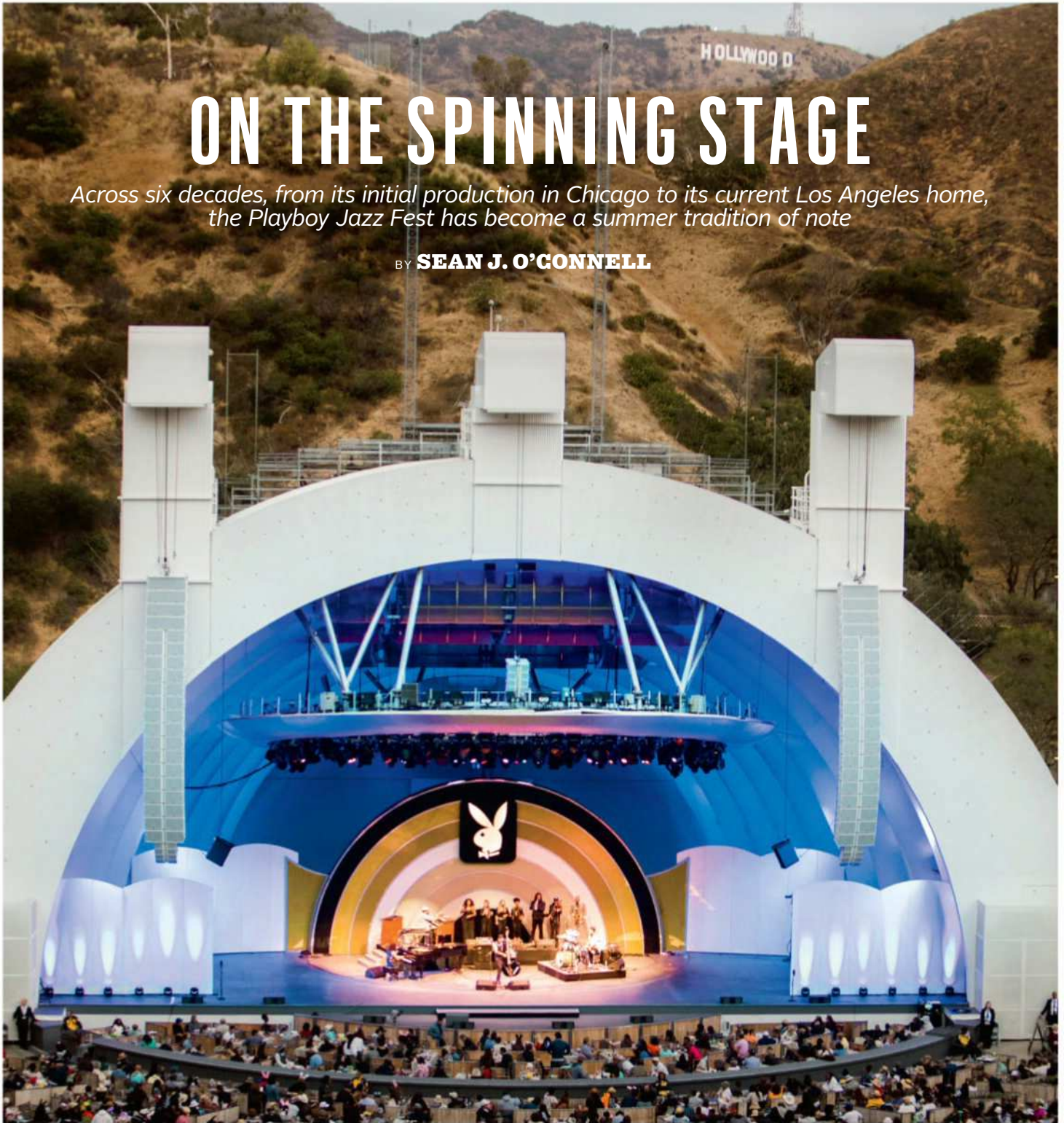
CLASSIC PLAYMATES MICHELE DRAKE AND ELAN CARTER • VINTAGE CARTOONS • BUNNIES WAVE THE FLAG

HERITAGE

ON THE SPINNING STAGE

Across six decades, from its initial production in Chicago to its current Los Angeles home, the Playboy Jazz Fest has become a summer tradition of note

BY **SEAN J. O'CONNELL**





HERITAGE

It was an outrageously confident promise: “See and hear more great stars in one weekend than most people see in a lifetime,” declared ads for the first ever Playboy Jazz Festival. But the three-day August 1959 event more than delivered.

The brainchild of Hugh Hefner, the first jazz festival was part celebration of PLAYBOY’s five-year anniversary and part marketing strategy, a way to raise the magazine’s profile and stake out cultural territory. The powerhouse lineup featured such first-ballot hall of famers as Dave Brubeck, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Coleman Hawkins, Nina Simone and Sonny Rollins. Five concerts showcased more than three dozen acts, and the cheap seats cost a little more than a buck. That August weekend Playboy had taken the first step in creating what would become one of the liveliest and longest-running jazz festivals in America—though two decades would pass before it took the second step.

From the introductory issue of PLAYBOY in December 1953, jazz had supplied the soundtrack. It was one of four topics Hefner suggested his readers would enjoy discussing with women—Nietzsche, Picasso and sex being the others. In 1957 the magazine introduced an annual reader’s poll of the hottest jazz acts and released vinyl collections featuring the winners. Music reviews and ads for hi-fi systems and the newest releases from Gerry Mulligan and Charles Mingus abound in early issues. “Jazz is the most personal of arts,” Hefner declared, “and, if we bring our passion to it, we are rewarded.” For Hefner, that passion demanded a living, breathing outlet.

But the festival faced a crisis before it was even under way, recalls Dick Rosenzweig, who in 1958 had begun what was to be a nearly 60-year career with Playboy: “We got a call from the mayor’s office. They informed us that they were sorry, but we could no longer hold the festival outside at Soldier Field.” Moving quickly, the Playboy team secured the Chicago Stadium, an enclosed, air-conditioned arena. “It rained like hell that weekend,” Rosenzweig says. “So thank you, Mayor Daley.”

The festival opened Friday night with 33-year-old trumpeter Miles Davis at the height of his powers, spinning elongated soul on *Kind of Blue*’s “So What?” alongside alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley. Playboy donated the proceeds from the evening to the Chicago Urban League, a civil rights organization. Vocalist trio Lambert, Hendricks & Ross put the perfect ring-a-ding swing on Saturday night, while Ella Fitzgerald closed the weekend with a spirited “How High the Moon,” leveling the crowd with blasts of nimble scatting. (It had taken \$10,000—twice the amount any other performer earned that weekend—to land Fitzgerald.)



The first Playboy Jazz Festival took place in Chicago in August 1959. Noted music critic Leonard Feather later called it “the greatest single weekend in the history of jazz.”

Billboard declared the event an “overwhelming success.” The musicians and crowds were happy, and the magazine was elated. Nearly 70,000 tickets had been sold across the three days. Ambitious plans for a 1960 jazz fest—one that would take place in three cities—were discussed, but nothing materialized. “We were in such an expansive and go-go mood, there was only so much we could do,” says Rosenzweig. “We were constantly busy doing other events and promotions.” The first Playboy Club, for example, opened in Chicago in 1960, and locations around the world soon followed. With distractions like that, it’s no wonder the festival went quiet.

...

In the early 1970s Hefner bought Playboy Mansion West and began to spend more time in Los Angeles. When he finally decamped from Chicago to the West Coast, he brought his love of jazz with him. So when the magazine’s 25th anniversary rolled around in 1979, what better way to celebrate than to revive the jazz fest, 20 years after its original incarnation?

On June 15, 1979, the revitalized Playboy Jazz Festival, now a two-day affair, kicked off on the Hollywood Bowl’s iconic half-dome stage. Local promoter Darlene Chan produced the event. “I put all the elements together,” she says—everything from booking talent to coordinating lights, sound and transportation. In the two decades between the first and second jazz festivals, much had changed within the jazz world, but Chan and her staff crafted a remarkable lineup that included Benny Goodman, Sarah Vaughan, Art Blakey and Herbie Hancock. Acts that leaned outside the jazz world—such as Joni Mitchell, who played tunes from her collaboration with Mingus—signaled that the fest would be musically inclusive.

For almost 40 years the festival has presided over rain-free weekends at the Bowl, with Chan working behind the scenes every year. It has become the unofficial start of summer in L.A., a weekend when the hardest part can be trying to keep up with the rest of the attendees. A vast range of jazz acts (Tony Bennett, Ornette Coleman, Dianne Reeves), world music artists



Miles Davis (above) and Ella Fitzgerald (far right) performed at the 1959 Playboy Jazz Festival. Twenty years later and thousands of miles west, Playboy revived the fest at the Hollywood Bowl (page 159), where it has been an annual event ever since. Sarah Vaughan performed at the first L.A. event (top left); Hef signed a fan's program in 1983 (middle).

(Hugh Masekela, King Sunny Ade) and pop outfits (the Roots, Common, Ozomatli, Sheila E) have all performed tight 50-minute sets. The crowds are huge and energetic, often enlivened by the contents of their picnic baskets—one perk of the Bowl is that patrons can bring their own food and drink. Across its hardwood benches, stadium chairs and intimate box seats, the Bowl can accommodate 17,500 revelers. The summer sun slowly works its way to the back of the amphitheater, a peak glow nestling into the dinner hour.

Ten-time Grammy-winning guitarist and vocalist George Benson has been a frequent performer, occupying that perfect position between instrumental virtuosity and tender R&B suavity. A natural and engaging frontman, Benson knows how to entertain both the champagne sippers in the front and the Jell-O shot pounders in the back of the house.

"In a large place like the Bowl, you're trying to reach that person way out in the last row," Benson says. "In a little room, they hear you and feel what you're doing. To get that sound out to the last row in the Hollywood Bowl, that's

difficult. It's not just the sound system; it's how you play what you play and the selection of the materials. You have to find *the spot*."

The festival has grown into an institution, showcasing some of the most significant jazz musicians of the past half-century. It also fosters up-and-coming talent. Inviting young performers to fill the opening time slots has become an enduring tradition. And as L.A.'s largest jazz fest, playing it serves as a measure of success for local artists.

Bassist and singer Miles Mosley, a member of the trailblazing West Coast Get Down collective, first played the festival with his high school band in the late 1990s. Last year Mosley had his own festival berth, leading his chameleonic soul band through a set of songs indebted to the City of Angels. For him, it was the fulfillment of a childhood dream. "The Playboy Jazz Festival is the pinnacle of what you seek to attain as a kid looking at your musical heroes," he says. "The first time that stage turns around and you see that crowd, man, it's an experience."

From three o'clock in the afternoon until 11 o'clock at night, the live music plays practically

nonstop, facilitated by an innovation made possible by Playboy: A large center-stage circular platform, bisected by a partition, ensures the continuous soundtrack. As one band plays on the audience-facing side of the platform, the other is a whirl of stagehands and musicians quickly loading out one band and setting up another. When one set ends, it fades into the next as the circle slowly revolves to reveal the upcoming act. It is unlike any other festival in its efficiency.

"We're blessed to have that turntable," says Chan. "It's what makes our festival a little different." When the Bowl was remodeled, Playboy paid to have the platform installed permanently. The old equipment required workers to rotate the stage manually. "Now I just press a button," says Chan.

Nearly 60 years after its debut, the festival is still carrying on Hefner's mission of bringing a lifetime's worth of music to a single weekend. (This year's all-star lineup includes Charles Lloyd and Lucinda Williams.) The only thing the listener has to do is remember to bring a corkscrew. ■

An American Outlaw

An incident over supposedly indecent photos transformed Hugh Hefner into a tireless defender of free speech

It was late afternoon, June 4, 1963, and Hugh Hefner lay asleep in bed in his Chicago mansion. The then 37-year-old had stayed up into the early hours of that day, working on the August installment of his sprawling *Playboy Philosophy*, and he desperately needed sleep.

But it was not to be: Hefner's housekeeper awakened him with the ominous news that four members of the Chicago Police Department's vice squad were downstairs wielding a warrant for his arrest. Hefner kept them waiting for more than an hour, until his two attorneys arrived. Finally, the *PLAYBOY* editor-in-chief and publisher emerged, wearing a pink cardigan, white sports shirt and dark slacks. He requested and was granted permission to change into a suit, whereupon Chicago's finest placed him under arrest and drove him to the central police building five miles down the road. The charge? Publishing obscenity. The offending material? *The Nudest Jayne Mansfield*, *PLAYBOY*'s June 1963 full-color pictorial and behind-the-scenes peek at the buxom actress's latest movie, in which she would appear in the buff.

Like defamation and so-called fighting words, obscenity was then (and still is) classified as unprotected speech—that is, not covered by the protections granted under the First Amendment. The definition of obscenity had been laid out in 1957's *Roth v. United States*: An "average person," the Supreme Court decided, would be able to recognize it when "the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest."

In other words, obscenity was highly subjective. And Hefner recognized immediately what was at stake. "The freedoms of speech and press are among the most precious guaranteed by our Constitution," he later wrote in the



The June 4, 1963 Chicago police booking photo of Hugh Hefner.

October 1963 *Playboy Philosophy*, in which he addressed his arrest. "Without them, all other freedoms would soon vanish and our democracy itself would disappear."

After posting bail, Hef was free in under an hour. But he and others were left to wonder at the city of Chicago's motivations. As *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Irv Kupcinet asked, "The obvious question...is: Why now? *PLAYBOY* has been publishing nudes...for years." Mansfield was by then a longtime *PLAYBOY* favorite. She had first appeared in the magazine as the

February 1955 *Playmate* and then each February in all but one year through 1960.

Chicago prosecutor John Melaniphy told the press that the charge of obscenity was grounded in a combination of factors: The magazine had printed photos of a man in a business suit sitting next to a nude Mansfield lying in bed, with captions that describe her as writhing and gyrating. Taken together, Melaniphy contended, the content was so suggestive as to be obscene.

But behind the attempted censorship Hefner saw other forces at work—forces that had nothing to do with nudity. In December 1962 comedian Lenny Bruce had played a Chicago club and been busted mid-act for obscenity; the city put him on trial in February 1963. Hefner defended the controversial comedian and his "blue" material in two subsequent appearances of the *Playboy Philosophy*. He saw a direct cause and effect. "I criticized Chicago authorities for Lenny's arrest," he later wrote in *Hugh Hefner's Playboy*. "In response, the Chicago authorities came and arrested me. The excuse they used was a pictorial on Jayne Mansfield."

Legal proceedings soon got under way in the city's case against Hefner. In a July 25 hearing, the prosecution argued that the June 1963 *PLAYBOY* was "filth for the sake of filth." Hefner's attorney's attempted to have the case thrown out, to no avail; a court date was set for the fall.

On November 19 a jury of 11 women and one man was selected. The trial began the following day, with reporters from newspapers, radio stations and television shows packing the Chicago municipal courtroom. Hefner attended, accompanied by a *Playmate*. A *Playboy* publicist handed out copies of the *Playboy Philosophy*.

The trial was fiery but without major incident, with the city arguing that the Mansfield pictorial inflamed the sexual appetite. To



PLAYBOY's June 1963 pictorial *The Nudest Jayne Mansfield* landed Hugh Hefner in trouble with the city of Chicago, whose prosecutors argued that the photos and captions were too suggestive for print. **Above:** One of the photos cited in the court case. **Inset:** The June cover teases the pictorial.

support its case, the prosecution brought forth experts, including a Loyola University psychology professor who testified that the nude photographs of the actress appealed to the “prurient interest of the average reader.” Under cross-examination, the professor refused to acknowledge that his opinion was personal rather than professional but did allow that moral judgments fall outside the realm of psychology.

Naturally the defense team marshaled to the witness stand its own psychology experts, who contended that the material was not obscene. Hef’s attorneys even appealed to the jury’s patriotism, referencing Benjamin Franklin’s “Letters to Young Men on Choosing a Mistress” and calling Franklin a “playboy of 1776.” Hefner, of course, was called to testify; he declared that a mere five percent of his magazine was devoted to nude or seminude women. More important, he argued, every individual reader should be able to decide for themselves what they find morally and ethically acceptable.

On December 6 both sides rested, and the

decision went to the jury. It took only eight hours of deliberation for the jurors to realize they were deadlocked; they later revealed to reporters that they’d reached an impasse, with the vote at seven to five in favor of acquittal. On December 7 the judge ruled a mistrial, letting Hefner off the hook.

Following his trial, Hefner appeared more determined than ever to unshackle America from the constraints of conservatism. The legal entanglement had left him undaunted and seemingly defiant: In February 1964 *PLAYBOY* published a pictorial that seemed to be a sharp rejoinder to critics of the Mansfield photos. Taken on a movie set, the images once again feature a clothed man sitting beside a naked actress in a bed. And the trial, if anything, had been good for the magazine; the massive publicity led to what Hefner characterized as the “virtual sellout” of the June 1963 issue—close to 2.1 million copies were sold.

Chicago’s attempt to curtail Hefner’s growing empire seems to have galvanized his evolution

into a free-speech advocate. “We must be constantly on the alert,” Hef wrote in his October 1963 *Playboy Philosophy*, “to make certain that the label of ‘obscene’ is not used to censor other areas of free speech and press that are our precious heritage, but to which some fellow member of society—for whatever reason—may object.”

Hefner didn’t just talk the talk. In 1964 he formed the Hugh M. Hefner Foundation, whose principal goal is to defend First Amendment rights in addition to championing civil liberties. Over the years the foundation has given awards to more than 100 individuals—from lawyers and librarians to high school students and journalists—to recognize their work fighting censorship and safeguarding First Amendment protections.

In 2010 Hefner reflected on the origins of his convictions. “I saw the hypocrisy in the notion that obscenity could somehow be connected to sex, instead of to war and bigotry,” he told *Vanity Fair*. “I believed that sex, when properly understood, could be the best of who we are.” ■



Michele Drake

May 1979 Playmate



*"I'm what you might call your basic California girl, as basic as they come," said Playmate **Michele Drake** in her Centerfold interview. We beg to differ. A self-described descendant of Sir Francis Drake, Michele was born in La Jolla and grew up body surfing the Pacific. She bagged acting roles in American Gigolo and on The Jeffersons before re-inventing herself as a film producer. Throughout her burgeoning career, Michele possessed a singular enthusiasm for all things sensual, declaring, "I like to hear the rhythm of the waves breaking against the shore when I make love." Curiosity had gotten the better of the blonde bombshell when she was a teenager: "I got sick of hearing about sex, so I tried it, and, naturally, I've loved it ever since." Her preferred foreplay? Having her breasts kissed. Ideal escape? Soaking in a Jacuzzi by candlelight. Ultimate fantasy? To be a female Hugh Hefner. "Believe it or not," Michele said, "I have no sexual hang-ups whatsoever." We believe it.*







A full-page portrait of Elan Carter, a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a white, short-sleeved, lace-trimmed top with a deep V-neckline. Her arms are crossed over her chest. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Elan Carter

June 1994 Playmate



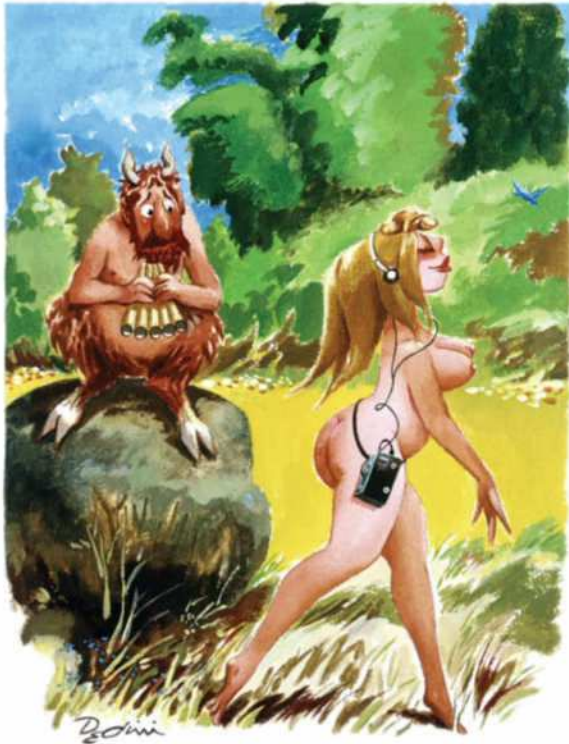
Bow before her: Playmate **Elan Carter** is Motown royalty, the daughter of a founding member of the Temptations (lower right above). “As a kid, hanging around backstage at Temptations concerts, I met Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Smokey Robinson—everyone,” Elan said. Perhaps the New Jersey native’s tuneful history accounts for the musical flair that emerged in her career. After studying acting and broadcast journalism—and traveling the globe working as a model—Elan starred in music videos for the likes of Aerosmith and Chico DeBarge and appeared onstage with Duran Duran, Tone-Loc, Bobby Brown and more. She even guest-starred as a member of the villainous rock group Bleeding Eardrum on the TV show *Black Scorpion*. (Another acting milestone: playing a receptionist in a 1995 *Seinfeld* episode.) As to her own tastes, musical and otherwise, Elan said, “I love to light candles, play Sade and be seductive.” To paraphrase one of her dad’s songs, the girl’s all right with us.





Classic cartoons

A medley of gems from our archive strikes just the right chord



"This next song is for all you ladies out there who have ever loved a man, or maybe another woman, or perhaps a guy who liked other guys, or even a woman who could go both ways..."



"How would you like to pluck that sucker at this year's Metropolitan Boat Show?"



"Don't even think about it, Shirley!"

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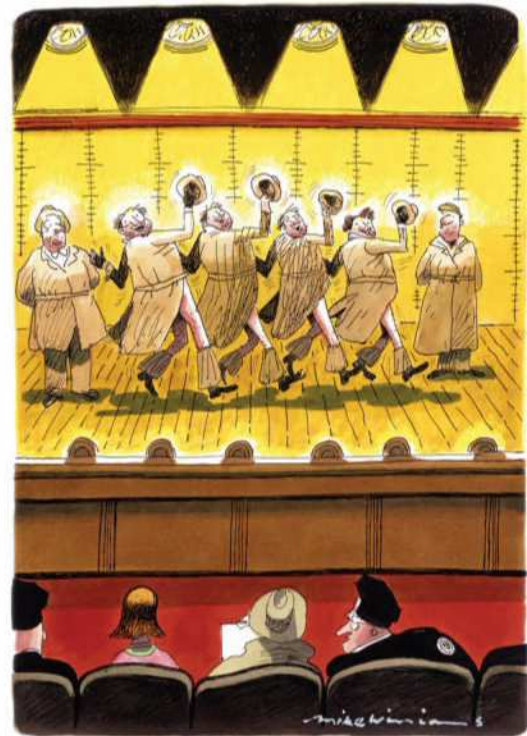




"Her Elvis impression's never going to fool anybody, Maury. But what the hell."



"You know, since we got cable, I haven't seen you touch your organ."



"Are you sure they know the seriousness of this charge?"

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CHICAGO, 1976

A platoon of Bunnies plants the flag for Playboy.



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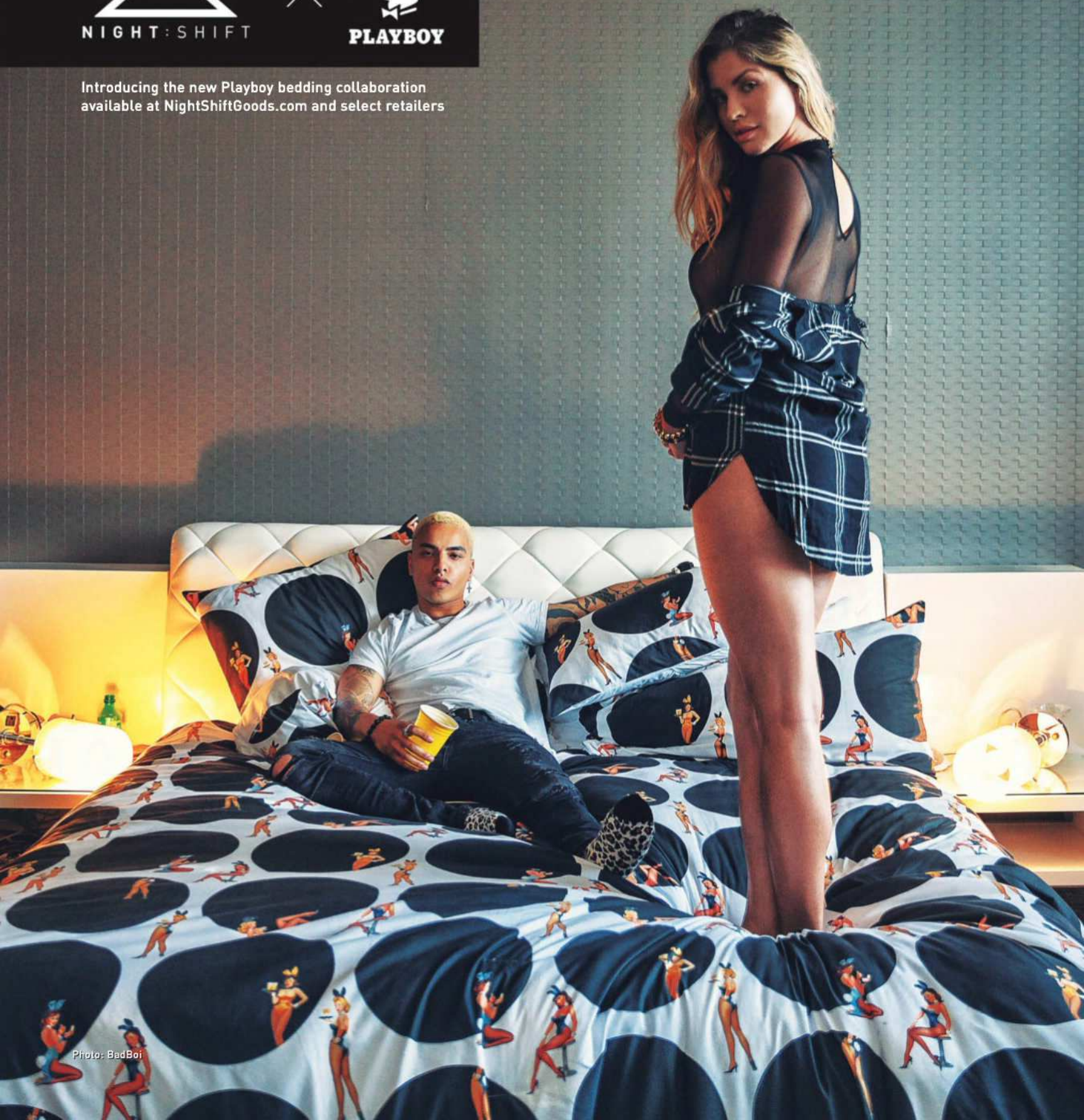


Photo: BadBoi

"We don't always wear plaid, but when we do, it is usually a good time."

-Moods of Norway



moods of norway